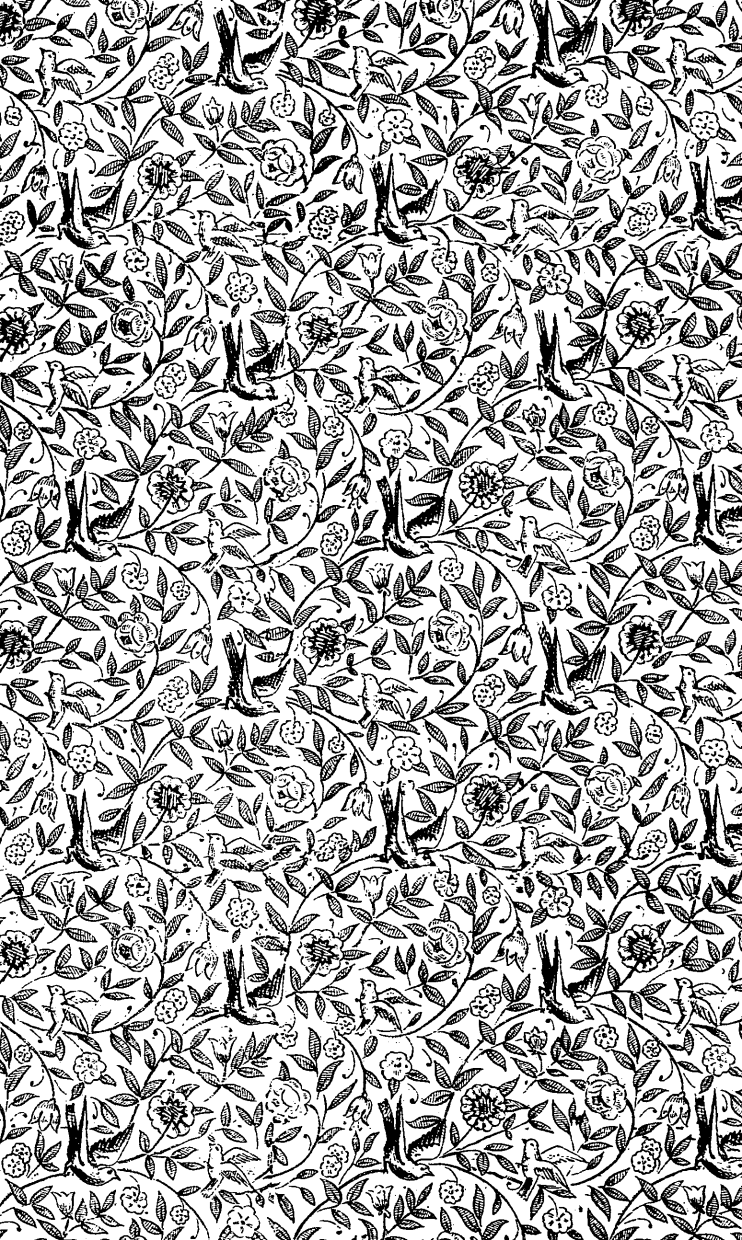


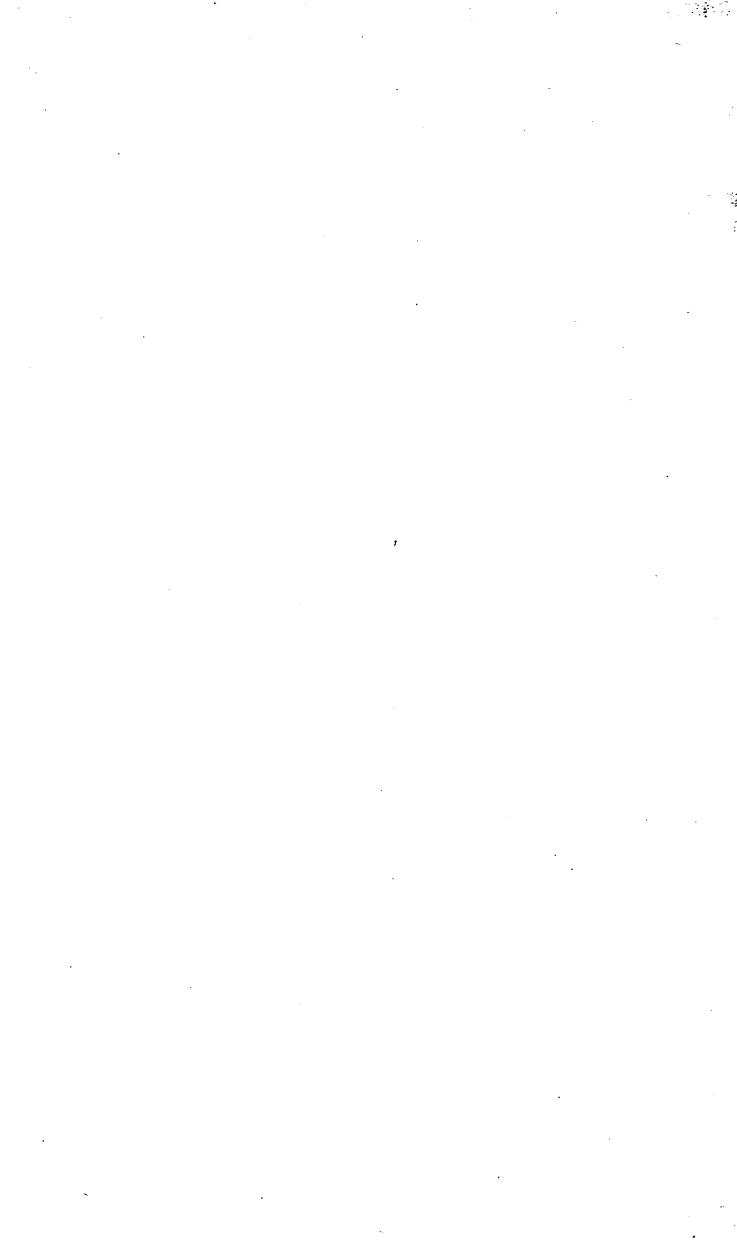
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THE
ELEMENTS OF METHODISM:

A

SERIES OF SHORT LECTURES

ADDRESSED

To One Beginning a Life of
Godliness.

BY

D. STEVENSON, D. D.



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WALDEN & STOWE.

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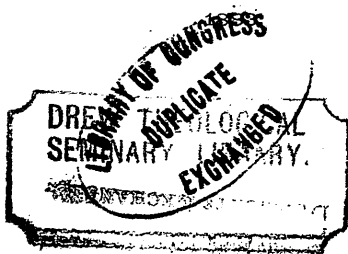
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PREFACE.

OFTEN, when desiring to recommend some small book to probationers and other persons, for general information on the subject of Methodism, I have been at a loss to know what particular book to select. The Discipline I have sometimes hesitated to place in the hands of such persons, for the reason that, while it contains more of Methodism than any other book of its size, it contains it in the unattractive form of mere declaration and statement, unrelieved by explanation or illustration.

The little volume which is here given to the public is given with the hope that it may, in some measure, supply the need indicated. I have endeavored to embody in it as full presentations of the doctrines, discipline, work, history, and usages of the Methodist Episcopal Church as it has been possible for me to do consistently with the idea of making it a cheap elementary book.

The Twenty-five Articles of Religion, though not given in it in the form in which they appear in the Discipline, are all included, being distributed under appropriate heads. The discussions in the chapters

devoted to these Articles have been made to conform to the doctrinal statements contained in the Articles. In this way the dry bones of the Articles have had some flesh put upon them; and if they shall not thereby have been rendered, to any extent, positively attractive to the ordinary reader, they will, I trust, have been rendered, to some little extent at least, less unattractive.

It is hoped that the book may be found especially useful in the training of probationers. These persons do not receive the kind of attention in the ordinary class-meeting which is requisite to fit them for the highest degree of usefulness in the Church. Some pastors are seeing the necessity of taking them under their own immediate supervision and instruction. The thought of the possible use of this book, in the hands of pastors and probationers, in a course of instruction of this kind, has had its influence with me in respect to the matter and form which I have given to it. But it is not designed exclusively for probationers. It is hoped that it may be found useful in the hands of many persons not in any way connected with the Church, and in the hands of some who are in full membership in it. Possibly, also, some of our young ministers may find it useful to themselves as a book of reference.

THE AUTHOR.

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ELEMENTS OF METHODISM.

Chapter I.

GREETING.

DEAR FRIEND,—You have indicated a desire to live a life of godliness. In this you have acted wisely. The godly life is the only life that is consistent with your exalted nature and relations. It is the only true life. Why should we, the most highly endowed and the most richly blessed of all the creatures of God on earth, not have the profoundest regard for the character of God, and the most earnest desire to be like him? Why should we not desire to do his will and to live in his favor? Why should we not be willing to place ourselves under his watch-care and guidance, and to trust to his providence for protection and happiness? Why should we not rejoice in his promises, and constantly desire his presence?

It was said by one of old, one who spoke from the largest experience and the deepest reflection, that the fear of the Lord—not the terror nor the dread of the Lord, but a proper regard for his character and his claims—is the beginning of wisdom. By this he meant that such a feeling is the beginning of the only

truly wise course of life; that a life regulated and governed by it is a life of safety, a life that can not end in disaster, however difficult and dangerous the way may be through which it leads.

The godly life is a life of the most satisfying realizations and of the most glorious prospects. It is a life that leads from all that is undesirable to all that is desirable; from sin to righteousness, from condemnation to approval, from imperfection to perfection, from misery to bliss, from labor to rest, from mortality to immortality, from earth to heaven, from association with sinners to companionship with the glorified.

It is the life which God would have us live. To be godly is to be like God. This he wishes us to be. He wishes us to be children to him, that he may be a Father to us. Having entered upon this life, therefore, you have at length begun to act in accordance with the will of God.

But human wisdom, as well as divine, approves your course. Many persons who are the least inclined to live this life are constrained to admit that no other life is proper to any one. In view, therefore, of the wisdom of the step which you have taken, we extend to you a most cordial greeting, rejoicing in the fact that you have placed yourself in the company of those who value the favor of God and the salvation of their own souls above all other things.

But in extending to you an expression of the pleasure which we feel in view of the desire you have indicated, we think it highly important to impress upon you

the necessity of fostering and strengthening that desire as assiduously as possible. Good desires, like coals of fire on a hearth-stone, cease to burn if left to themselves. As you did not come into your present frame of mind by accident, do not allow yourself to fall into the error of supposing that you will continue in it without effort. Nothing that is truly good grows spontaneously in this world, that has been so badly injured by sin. Every thing of the kind needs help to cause it to grow. It will be necessary for you, therefore, if you wish to realize the richest fruit of your good desire, to pursue a course of study and reflection, and, at the same time, to cultivate the habit of constantly lifting up your heart to God in prayer for his blessing upon your efforts. It is only the intelligent, thoughtful Christian, the one whose mind is well furnished with the truth, and whose conscience is kept constantly alive by it, that is able, in the most difficult and trying circumstances of life, to resist the temptations of the adversary of souls, and stand steadfast in the love and fear of God. Emotion, however essential as an element of religion it may be, does not constitute the whole of religion. If unaccompanied by a knowledge of the truth, it is like a spring of water which bursts forth from the earth in rainy weather, but diminishes its flow when the rain ceases to fall, and soon disappears altogether.

In order to the attainment of any high and permanent degree of excellence in the divine life, emotion must be supported and sustained by knowledge.

Chapter II.

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

THE knowledge which is essential to excellence in the life of godliness is not ordinary knowledge. Much of this kind of knowledge is very desirable and will be of advantage to you, even in your efforts to live that life, if its use be directed by another and superior kind of knowledge. That other and superior kind of knowledge is sacred knowledge, the knowledge that is contained in the sacred or Holy Scriptures. These Scriptures are sometimes called canonical. They are so called for the reason that they have been decided to be of divine origin, and have been so declared by the canons—that is, the rules or laws—of the Church. Hence the declaration that “in the name of the Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs,

Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, Cantica, or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less. All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical." (See Art. V of Religion, in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.) All other books contain the products of the human understanding. These contain those of the divine mind. Men did the writing; but they did it as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost." The contents of these Scriptures, therefore, are revelations from God, and if any other writings are worthy to be held in high esteem, these are worthy to be held in ten thousand times higher esteem. They are to a person who is endeavoring to live a life of godliness what a compass and a chart are to a mariner on the deep—matters of indispensable necessity. In them the way of godliness is clearly pointed out. General principles are laid down, and often specific directions given, by which it may be easily known what things are proper to be done, and what are not. And, as the way of godliness is the way of salvation, these Scriptures contain what is necessary to salvation. And not only so, but as is declared in the Article of Religion from which we have just quoted, they "contain *all* things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

This full, explicit, and emphatic declaration has been found to be necessary, in order to guard against the influence of an error into which Roman Catholics have fallen. They affirm that the Sacred Scriptures alone do *not* contain all that is necessary to salvation, but that, in order to arrive at a perfect and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and a perfect guide in the way of godliness and salvation, it is necessary to add tradition to the Sacred Scriptures, and to have the two explained and declared by the Romish Church. Tradition is that which is handed down from generation to generation without being committed to writing. It may sometimes contain a measure of truth. It as frequently contains a great deal of error.

This doctrine of Romanists finds no support nor countenance in the words of Christ. He said, "Search the *Scriptures*; for in *them* ye think ye have eternal life: and *they* are they which testify of me." (John v, 39.) So far from being supported by the words of Christ, it is condemned by them. In speaking at another time, he said: "Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines *the commandments of men*; for laying *aside the commandment of God*, ye hold *the tradition of men*." (Mark vii, 7, 8.)

At the time when Christ was among men, the Jews devoted very little attention to the study of the Scriptures. They were guided in spiritual things chiefly by their traditions. Hence they were ignorant of the signs of the Messiahship, and were not prepared to receive the Savior in his true character.

And the same error which blinded their eyes to his claims has caused Romanists to pervert the truths which he taught, now that he is no longer on earth.

While, therefore, in studying the Sacred Scriptures, you may, with perfect propriety, receive all the aid that comes to your hand, in order to your attaining to a correct understanding of the facts and truths taught in them, you should never allow yourself to accept any statements or explanations, whether from private persons or from the official representatives of the Church, which, upon thorough examination, you find to be opposed to the principles clearly taught in these sacred writings. Paul said to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. iii, 15.) What was true of the Scriptures in relation to Timothy is true of them in relation to all other persons; they are able to make them wise unto salvation.

In guarding you against this error of Roman Catholics, it is necessary, at the same time, to guard you against an error into which some others have fallen. It is held by some that the Old Testament Scriptures were designed exclusively for the Jews, and that only the New Testament Scriptures are necessary for Christians. This error is met and condemned by the following declaration: "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and

man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth, yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral." (See Article VI, of Religion, in the Discipline.)

It was to the Old Testament Scriptures that Christ referred when he said to the Jews, in the words already quoted, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me;" as not a line of the New Testament Scriptures had at that time been written. It was to the Old Testament Scriptures that Paul referred, when, in writing to Timothy, he said that the Scriptures in which the latter had been instructed were able to make him wise unto salvation; and it was of them, as well as of the New Testament Scriptures, that he was speaking when he said, in 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The Sacred Scriptures, then, are the Scriptures of both Testaments, the old and the New. Neither Testament alone furnishes us with a full and complete

revelation of all that God has deemed it necessary for us to know concerning himself, ourselves, and the way of godliness and salvation. We find this full and complete revelation in the two Testaments taken together. These two Testaments compose the blessed Bible, the Book of God.

Take this book. Value it as a most precious gift from God to mankind. Make its principles yours. Regulate your conduct by its precepts. Aspire to attain to the ends which it holds out to view. Cherish its great and precious promises, and your life will be acceptable to God, and your eternity blissful and glorious.

Chapter III.

OF GOD.

THE first thing which it is important for you to do, is to consider the nature and character of Him whom you are trying to imitate and make your friend and protector; that is, God.

Pagans have been wont to bow down before images of gold and silver and stone, which, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not—calling upon them and worshiping them as gods. They have misconceived the nature of God. The Scriptures teach us that “we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts xvii, 29); that God is not inanimate, but “the living God” (Jer. x, 10); having “life in himself” (John v, 26); that he is not perishable, as the images of the pagans are, but that he endureth “forever” (Psa. cii, 12); is “the everlasting God” (Gen. xxi, 33); that he does not possess a body, but “is a spirit” (John iv, 24); and is, therefore, “invisible” (1 Tim. i, 17). In regard to his power and wisdom, evidences of which we see in the things about us and in ourselves, they declare that he is “the Lord God omnipotent” (Rev. xix, 6), and that his “understanding is infinite” (Psa. cxlvii, 5); in a word, that he is

the "only wise God" (Jude 25). Of his goodness they say that he is "abundant" in it (Ex. xxxiv, 6); that "the earth is full" of it (Psa. xxxiii, 5); that it "endureth continually" (Psa. lii, 1); and that it is evermore being displayed to mankind in acts of love, of compassion, and of blessing. God was addressed by those to whom he revealed himself, of old, in these words: "Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all." (Nehemiah ix, 5, 6.) He is, therefore, according to the Scriptures, "the true God" (Jer. x, 10), and besides him there is none; "for I," saith he, "am God, and there is none else." (Isa. xlv, 22.) "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi, 4); and he, and he only, is Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor.

But while there is but one God, he is sometimes spoken of in the Scriptures in one relation or character, and sometimes in another. At times, for instance, he is spoken of as a *Father*. Christ, in teaching the Lord's Prayer, began it with the words, "Our *Father* which art in heaven." (Matt. vi, 9.) In teaching his disciples that they should not give undue honor to men, he said, "For one is your *Father*, which is in heaven." (Matt. xxiii, 9.) In speaking of himself he said, "For him hath God the *Father* sealed." (John vi, 27.) At other times he is spoken of as a *Son*. One,

for instance, who, in the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of John is called God, is, in the 34th verse of the same chapter, called “the *Son* of God.” In John vi, divine power is several times claimed for one who, in the sixty-ninth verse of the same chapter, is called “the *Son* of the living God.” Again, in John x, 36, we have the phrase, “the *Son* of God.” At other times still he is spoken of as the *Holy Ghost*. Peter said to Ananias (Acts v, 3), “Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” and immediately afterwards (verse 4) he said to him, “Thou hast not lied unto *men*, but unto *God*,” thus showing that the *Holy Ghost* and *God* are one and the same. Again, in 1 Cor. iii, 16, we are told that we are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us. If we are the temple of God, it is God that dwelleth in us. But we are told that it is the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us. Hence, the Holy Ghost is *God*, and *God* the *Holy Ghost*.

In several passages God is spoken of in all three of these relations or characters—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—at one and the same time. In Matt. xxviii, 19, for instance, we have the following form of words: “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” In 2 Cor. xiii, 14, we have a form of benediction in these words: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.”

There is, therefore, but one God; but that God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is customary to

speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as persons, and to say that there are three persons in one Godhead. This doctrine is called the doctrine of the Trinity, and is opposed to the doctrine of those who are known as Unitarians. The doctrine of the Trinity is more fully set forth in the following terms: "There is but one *living and true God*, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in *unity* of this Godhead there are *three persons*, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." (See Article I, of Religion, in the Discipline.)

The doctrine of the Trinity is full of mystery; but so is the doctrine of our own existence. It is a doctrine which will prove increasingly interesting to you as you make progress in the life of godliness upon which you are entering. The terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are terms which will reveal to you a fullness, a richness, a sweetness, and a beauty in the divine nature which would not be suggested to you by the comprehensive term of God. The ideas associated with these terms will be sources of encouragement, inspiration, and joy to you in your efforts to realize the goodness of God.

Chapter IV.

THE FALL OF MAN, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

IN the first chapter and twenty-seventh verse of Genesis it is said: "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him." By this we are not to understand that man, physically considered, was created in the image of God; for there can not be any likeness between a human body and an invisible spirit, such as God is. What is meant is that man was created with a spiritual as well as a physical nature, and that he was spiritually pure, like God, having no other emotions, dispositions, thoughts, aims, or purposes than such as were in perfect harmony with the divine mind.

In the second chapter of Genesis we have an account of the delightful circumstances by which he was surrounded, and of the unobstructed and blissful intercourse which he was permitted to enjoy with his Creator. In the same chapter we have an account of a command which was given to him by the Almighty, with the understanding that the observance of it would insure to him a continuation of life, while the violation of it would be followed by death.

In the third chapter we have the sad history of the violation of this command, and of the change which

at once took place in the feelings of the man in his relations to God and in the circumstances of his life. So soon as the deed had been done he became conscious that the likeness which he had sustained to God was lost; and, overwhelmed with a sense of mortification and shame, he sought to hide himself from God. Called forth from his hiding-place, he was charged with his sin, and was condemned by the Almighty, and excluded from the paradise in which he had had his abode.

He was thus, by his alienation from God, spiritually dead, and was destined soon, by the separation of his spirit from his body, to undergo physical, or natural, death.

From this first man the whole human family has descended. What has been the effect of his sin upon the different branches and members of that family? It is affirmed by some persons that the descendants of Adam did not inherit any thing from him which deserves the name of depravity, or original sinfulness, or original sin. They say that it is true that men are capable of following or imitating Adam, in yielding to temptation and falling into sin, and that they are liable to do so, but that such following or imitating of him is the only thing which can, with any propriety, be called original sin. They deny that there is any thing in the nature of men, as the result of Adam's fall, which predisposes them to sin.

This is not the view of the great majority of Christians. The latter hold that the descendants of Adam

have inherited from him a corrupt nature, which continually inclines them to sin. Their view is substantially that which is set forth in the Seventh Article of Religion as found in the Methodist Discipline, in these words: "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually."

This is the doctrine which is taught in the Sacred Scriptures. From them we learn that the first children that were born to Adam were born to him after he had sinned and lost his original righteousness, and that, consequently, they were born in a state of sin. What was true of them has been true of all who have descended from them; they have all come into the world in a state of sin. The Psalmist says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. li, 5); and, "Who," says Job, "can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job xiv, 4.) Hence the Apostle Paul, in speaking on this subject, says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii, 14.) And again, "The carnal mind"—by which he means the natural mind, or the mind with which a man is born into the world—"is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii, 7.)

Such is the condition of the human family; not that the descendants of Adam sinned in him, or that they are to be held responsible for his sin, but that, in consequence of his sin, they have come into the world with a corrupt nature and an inclination to evil, and are thus "very far gone from original righteousness." If this be true, then sinning is natural to men, and those persons err who say that "it is possible for men, provided they fully employ the powers and faculties with which they are endowed, to live without sin." In order that any man shall live without sin, he must have divine aid. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he can not turn and prepare himself, *by his own natural strength and works*, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." (See Eighth Article of Religion in the Discipline.) By the clause, "without the grace of God by Christ *preventing us*," is meant, without the grace of God by Christ *going before* and *helping* us; the original meaning of the term "preventing" having been that of going before.

In proof of the correctness of this view of man's condition, we find, in Rom. v, 6, that Paul speaks of man as being, in his natural state, "without strength." In 2 Cor. v, 14, it is said that men "were all dead." In Eph. ii, 1, the phrase "dead in trespasses and sins" is used with regard to the natural man. If this

be true, that we were “without strength”—moral strength, of course—nay, much more, were even “dead,” morally, it could not be possible for us to return, without divine aid, to a state of purity.

How sad our condition! how deplorable! Would God pity us? Would he come to us in mercy? Would he afford us help? Would he provide a way of escape for us?

Chapter V.

THE ATONEMENT.

THE questions asked in the conclusion of the last chapter can be answered in the affirmative. The goodness of God is too great to admit of his ever having had any other than the most tender and loving feelings toward a race of beings who had originally borne his own likeness and image, how far soever gone they might be from their original righteousness. He desired that they should live, and not that they should die; for he takes "*no* pleasure," as he himself has declared, "in the death of him that dieth." (Ezek. xviii, 32.)

How was he to afford the needed help? How was he to provide the way of escape? By means of an atonement; that is, a satisfaction for the sins of men. An atonement could be made only by means of a substitute, who would be able to stand in the place of the sinners, under the violated law, and receive the strokes from it which were due to the sinners themselves.

Where could such a substitute be found? Not among the corrupt descendants of Adam; for no man could act as a substitute for others who was in need of a substitute for himself. One who was without

corruption of nature must be selected. Such a substitute could not be found on earth, but only in heaven.

But such a substitute must be not only without need of an atonement for himself, but, in fact, superior to the law to which he would be compelled to submit in making atonement for others, so that, though its heaviest strokes might fall upon him, he could not be destroyed by them.

Who was qualified for such a position?

The Son of God, and he only.

But the Son of God was of an invisible, spiritual nature, and, therefore, could not, without appearing in the flesh, put himself in man's place. This he did. He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." (John i, 14.) He said himself, "A body hast thou prepared me." (Heb. x, 5.) The Son of God, thus manifested in the flesh, was he who was known as Jesus the Christ. (John xx, 31.)

A full account of all the facts and circumstances attending his incarnation—that is, his making himself manifest in the flesh by his reception of the body prepared for him—is given in the first and second chapters of the Gospel of Luke.

Thus prepared with a body, he was able to suffer and to die for mankind. The Apostle Paul, in speaking of these important events, says, "Forasmuch, then, as the children"—that is, human beings, the

descendants of fallen Adam, the alienated children of God—"forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that he, through death, might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii, 14, 15.)

Thus prepared, he did suffer, did die. He suffered for mankind, died for mankind. He "bore our sins"—that is, he endured the sufferings which were due to us on account of our sins—"in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii, 24.) He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." (1 Pet. iii, 18.) He "was delivered for our offenses." (Rom. iv, 25.) For God "hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin"—that is, a sin-offering—"for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v, 21.)

But, as the penalty due for the violation of the law was death, it was necessary that the atoner should show himself superior to death. This he did by rising from the dead, after having offered his life a ransom on the cross for the lives of men. The pains of death were "loosed;" "because," as the Apostle Peter declares, "it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts ii, 24.) Without a knowledge of his resurrection we could have no assurance that a true and acceptable atonement had been made. With this knowledge, we are confident. "He was delivered," says the Apostle Paul, "for our offenses, and was

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raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv, 25.) And now, having finished the work which he came upon earth to do, it was necessary for him to return to heaven, there "to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix, 24.) And, accordingly, it is recorded that, after having appeared at different times to his disciples, after his resurrection from the dead, "he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right-hand of God" (Mark xvi, 19), where "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii, 25); and whence he himself declared he would come again "in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and" that "then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. xvi, 27.) In ascending into heaven, he did not ascend in his separate divine nature. He took with him his humanity. He ascended as the Son of God and the Son of man—as the God-man, the Christ, the Savior of the world. And the exalted and honorable position which he there occupies assures us of the favor which he has with the Father, as our friend; and it should kindle in us emotions of joy on account of the salvation which is possible to us "through the redemption that is in" him. (Rom. iii, 24.)

These precious doctrines are substantially declared in the Second and Third Articles of Religion, as found in the Discipline. The Second Article is in these words: "The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the

Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures—that is to say, the Godhead and manhood—were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.” The Third Article is in these words: “Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.” Let us praise God for his goodness to the children of men. Let us magnify the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, and rejoice that he hath redeemed us, and that he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Chapter VI.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT, AND THE
CONDITION OF SALVATION.

CHRIST, we have seen, died for men. Did he die for all men, or for some only? If he died for all men, will all be saved, without regard to their own dispositions or acts? And if any thing on their part is necessary, in order that they may enter into the enjoyment of the benefits of Christ's death, what is it?

Formerly it was not at all uncommon to hear the doctrine taught that Christ did not die for all men, or at least that salvation was not possible for all men. It was held that God had "chosen some men to eternal life" and had "passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath." This doctrine was very generally believed by Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, and was more or less clearly preached in most of their pulpits. A great change has taken place in the last fifty years. Most of the members and many of the ministers of these denominations entertain more liberal views on this subject; and, in so far as the doctrine referred to is preached at all, it is generally preached in a modified form. It has not been wholly given up, however. It is still

taught in many of the doctrinal writings and in some of the theological schools of the United States and of other countries, and from time to time efforts are made to render it acceptable to the people.

The history of this doctrine shows it to have been a stumbling-block in the way of many to whom it was preached. It presented the character of God in an unattractive light. It made him seem to be a mere arbitrary sovereign, and not the just and righteous God that he has declared himself to be. No man could know, when listening to the Gospel, and when urged to accept of Christ as his Savior, that he himself was not one of those that had been "passed by and foreordained to dishonor and wrath."

The Sacred Scriptures plainly teach that God is no respecter of persons. Paul says that it is God's will that *all* men should be saved. (1 Tim. ii, 4.) John, in speaking of Christ, says, "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for *ours only*, but also for the sins of the *whole world*." (1 John ii, 2.) Christ himself said, "Come unto me, *all* ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi, 28.) Just before his ascension into heaven he said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every* creature." (Mark xvi, 15.) And afterwards, in speaking through John, he said: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and *whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii, 17.) We learn from these

and many similar passages of Scripture that God has not "passed by" any person, but has included all men in the provision which he has made by the death of Christ for the salvation of men.

Christ "died for *all*." (2 Cor. v, 15.) But will all for whom Christ died be saved? It is the doctrine of Universalists that all will be saved, without regard to any thing that they may do or may fail to do. This doctrine is a very agreeable one to persons of an ungodly life; but it is not in accordance with the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures, which everywhere recognize men as intelligent, responsible beings, able to understand the worth of that which is offered to them, and to accept or reject it, and, therefore, not able to be saved without their own consent. Salvation has been *provided* for all men, and is freely *offered* to all men; and all *may* be saved if they will. But God does not force the precious boon upon any one. Salvation implies that the person saved has been brought into a state of mind in harmony with the mind of God. But it is impossible that any one could be brought into this state of mind without having accepted what God, in his goodness, has offered to him; and hence it is impossible that any such person could be saved. For God to save a man against the man's own will would be to destroy the man's responsibility in the very act of saving him, and thus to cause him to cease to be, in the truest and highest sense of the term, a man. Such an act would be like that of trying to save a fine china vase from a house

which was on fire by casting it out of a fourth-story window on to a hard pavement below. The fragments would remain, but the vase itself would have been destroyed in the act of trying to save it.

Salvation is offered to men ; but upon what terms ? In what way are they to make it their own ? Roman Catholics and some others seem to regard it as a thing to be purchased, and they rely upon their works of piety as the price to be paid for it. But Christ and the apostles did not so teach. Christ said, " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii, 16.) And again : " He that *believeth* on him is not condemned ; but he that believeth *not* is condemned *already, because* he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii, 18.) The Apostle Paul says : " By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God, which is, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that *believe* : for there is no difference ; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God : being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through *faith* in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God :

to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which *believeth* in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of *faith*. Therefore, we conclude that a man is *justified* by *faith* without the deeds of the law." (Rom. iii, 20-28.)

This doctrine is expressed in the Ninth Article of Religion in these words: "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by *faith*, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are *justified by faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

Yes, indeed, it is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort; for, if the condition of our justification were works of any kind, or sufferings, or any thing but faith, many persons would find it impossible to be saved, since many would find it impossible to comply with the condition. But all can believe, and, therefore, all can be saved. Thank God that we are not required to make an atonement for ourselves, nor to purchase the atonement which Christ has made for us; but that all that we are required to do, all that any soul on earth is required to do, in order to find acceptance with God, is to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter VII.

THE HOLY GHOST AND HIS WORK.

IT has already been shown that the Holy Ghost is one of the persons in the unity of the Godhead, and therefore divine. The Scriptures teach us that, in coming to men, he proceeds from the Father and the Son. Christ, in speaking of the communication of the Holy Ghost, said: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the *Father will send* in my name, he shall teach you all things." (John xiv, 26.) And then again, shortly afterwards: "But when the Comforter is come, whom *I will send* unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which *proceedeth from the Father.*" (John xv, 26.) The doctrine of the procession, as it is called, and of the divinity, of the Holy Ghost, as found in the Sacred Scriptures, is set forth in the Fourth Article of Religion in the following words: "The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

The Holy Ghost, then, which is the Divine Spirit, is sent forth by the Father and the Son—is sent into the world to aid in effecting the salvation of men. He comes to complete the work which was begun by the

Father in giving the Son, and which was continued by the Son in the offering which he made of his own body on the cross for the sins of men.

The work of the Holy Ghost is both that of a Reprover and that of a Comforter. It is that of a Reprover to the world; it is that of a Comforter to believers in Christ. He reproves "the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" he comforts believers by giving to them personal evidence of their acceptance with God. He does the work of reproving from *without*, by making impressions upon the minds and hearts of those reprovèd; he does the work of comforting from *within*, by establishing relations of fellowship and communion with the spirits of those comforted. With respect to the latter the Apostle Paul speaks of the Holy Ghost as making their bodies his abode. (1 Cor. iii, 16, and vi, 19.) He also speaks of the comforting influences which he affords them in so doing. "For ye have not," says the apostle, "received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii, 15, 16.)

In thus comforting believers with the assurance of their acceptance with God, the Holy Ghost, at the same time, works a change in their affections, dispositions, desires, and aspirations, suitable to their changed relations towards God. He begets in them a spirit of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,

faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v, 22, 23); so that they are new creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. v, 17), having the mind of Christ, and, so, loving God and all that he has taught men to love—his Word, his people, his house, his cause; and hating all that he has taught them to hate. The change which is thus wrought is great and worthy of the name which Christ gave to it when conversing with Nicodemus—that of a new birth. (John iii, 1–8.)

Not unfrequently persons who have believed are troubled because they can not have some sensible sign of the presence of the Spirit of God witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God. They would like to see the Spirit, hear the Spirit, or feel the Spirit, as they would see, hear, or feel any material object. They err in looking for a manifestation of the Spirit of God in such a way. Christ said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii, 8.) If a believer has become a new creature in Christ, so that he feels an impulse in his heart to call God Father, loves holiness for its own sake, and receives with pleasure the law of the Lord, he may rest satisfied that he has received the Spirit of God. Love to God as a Father, love of holiness, and cheerful obedience to the precepts of God's Word are not natural to man, "because," as the Apostle Paul says, "the carnal mind"—that is, the natural mind—"is enmity against God; for it is

not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii, 7); and no power but that of the Spirit of God can do away with this spirit of enmity to God and of insubjection to the law of God. Whoever, therefore, has in his own experience the undoubted fruit of the Spirit of God has a right to say that he has received the Spirit of God. By nature no man is in harmony with God. When a man finds in his soul emotions of filial affection toward God, a love of the holiness of God's character and will, and a sincere pleasure in living to the honor and glory of God, he may be sure that old things have passed away and that all things have become new. (2 Cor. v, 17.)

With those who continue to believe, and whose faith is continually manifested by their lives and works, the Holy Ghost continues to abide, purifying their affections and sanctifying their natures more and more, and thus making them more and more like God. They thus become, as the Apostle Paul says, temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi, 19); in other words, temples of God. (1 Cor. iii, 16.)

We are taught, by what has been said, that, from the time when we turn to Christ and accept him as our Redeemer and Savior, we cease to be left to ourselves; that from that time we have the light, the wisdom, and the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Ghost. Sweet thought! Precious doctrine!

And, with this doctrine, we have another, not less full of comfort, connected with it, and growing out

of it. It is this, that, in consequence of the change which has thus taken place in our relations and dispositions, we shall be permitted to participate in all the blessedness and glory that pertain to the Godhead ; for the Apostle Paul, in speaking of the fact of our adoption into the family of God, says, “ And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. viii, 17, 18.)

God be praised for the gift and work of the Holy Ghost !

Chapter VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

THE Twelfth Article of Religion in the Discipline is in these words: "Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable; wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God rise again and amend our lives. And, therefore, they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent."

In condemning those who say that it is impossible for a man to sin after he has been justified, this Article puts us on our guard against false security. He who thinks that he is out of the reach of danger, at any time while still in an enemy's country, is in the greatest danger. The Scriptures plainly teach us that sin is possible to us as long as we are on this side of the grave. The Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, uses these words: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." (1 Tim. i, 19.) He

who, having had a good conscience, has put it away, and, having had faith, has made shipwreck of it, has undoubtedly sinned. In Ezekiel we have the Lord speaking by the mouth of the prophet of a "righteous man" that "turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity" (Ezek. xviii, 26); and in Heb. iii, 12, we have these words: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." These passages teach us that it is possible for a man who is righteous to-day to be unrighteous to-morrow; for him who has faith to-day to have "an evil heart of unbelief" and to "depart from the living God" to-morrow.

But while we are taught the possibility of a man's turning away from God, and sinning, after he has received the Holy Ghost, we are not taught that there is any necessity for his doing so. Much more are we not taught, as some hold, that a man is a sinner still, even after he has received the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, and that he must continue to be a sinner as long as he lives; in other words, that there is no possibility of a man's living without sin. The salvation which such persons teach is a salvation from the punishment which is due to sin, but not a salvation from sin itself; which is a strange doctrine to be preached in the face of all that Christ and the apostles have said about righteousness in believers. "Be ye, therefore," said Christ, "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is

perfect." (Matt. v, 48.) "What shall we say, then?" says the Apostle Paul. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? . . . Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi, 1, 2, 6.)

It being God's will to have us live above sin, whoever, after having been justified, falls again into sin, brings himself again under condemnation; and whoever dies in this state will be lost. "For," says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in addressing those who were in Christ, "if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape"—we who are now in Christ—"if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii, 2, 3.)

But this Article teaches that God is merciful even to backsliders, if they repent. The Scriptures teach the same. God himself has thus spoken to backsliders: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." (Jer. iii, 22.)

It should be the aim of every Christian to resist temptation, and not to run any unnecessary risks; but to try to live as acceptably to God as possible. This can be done only by the most constant and zealous efforts to be obedient to the divine will, as well as to be filled with emotions of love to God. For "although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, can not put away our sins, and

endure the severity of God's judgments, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit." (Article X of Religion.) This is in accordance with what the Apostle James has said. "Even so," says this apostle, "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James ii, 17, 18, 26.)

Roman Catholics entertain a very dangerous error upon the subject of good works. They hold that a Christian can do all that he is divinely required to do, and *more*, and that for all that he may chance to do in excess of the divine requirement he may lay claim to some special favor at the hands of God. This doctrine is condemned in the Eleventh Article of Religion in these words: "Voluntary works—besides, over and above God's commandments—which are called works of supererogation, can not be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, 'When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.' (Luke xvii, 10.)"

Chapter IX.

THE FUTURE STATE.

NATURAL death, or the death of the body, is a separation of the soul from the body. Some persons hold that when this takes place the soul begins a sleep which is to be terminated only when the resurrection of the body shall take place. The Scriptures, on the contrary, teach us that the soul is still alive and awake after its separation from the body. When Stephen was stoned, he called upon the Lord, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts vii, 59.) The Apostle Paul speaks in this manner: "Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v, 6, 7.) In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus we have these words: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." (Luke xvi, 22, 23.) From these passages we learn that the souls of the dead do not remain here, in a state of

unconsciousness, but that they go, the good to be "present with the Lord," and the bad to suffer "torments."

Romanists teach that there is a place where those whose sins have not been fully expiated here suffer for a time, after death, before being permitted to enter into perfect peace and perfect rest. This place they call purgatory. They hold that the length of time during which those who are consigned to this place are required to stay there may be shortened by the prayers and the good works of their pious friends who remain on earth. Hence we hear of masses being offered for the souls that are in purgatory. The passages of Scripture already quoted are opposed to this doctrine: so are many others; while it has none in its favor. Hence, we truly say of it, in the Fourteenth Article of Religion: "The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory . . . is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God."

A large number of Universalists, while not teaching the doctrine of purgatory as held by Romanists, teach a doctrine very similar to it. Not being able to deny that many sinners die impenitent, and that the Scriptures teach that impenitent sinners must be punished, they hold that such are punished after death, but that the punishment which they receive will not be eternal, and that, in some way, they will eventually be restored to the favor of God, and will be permitted to enter into the state of rest and peace

and blessedness which is the inheritance of the pure and the holy. These are called Restorationists. Their doctrine has no better foundation than that of Romanists. It is based, not upon the utterances of the Sacred Scriptures, but upon the desires and fancies of men. Let no one deceive himself. This life, according to the Scriptures, is the time of trial and probation. All that we are taught to do, in order to gain entrance into heaven, we are taught to do now and here. There will be no change in the character and relations of any one after death. Those who die righteous will continue righteous; and those who die unrighteous will continue unrighteous.

The separation of the souls of men from their bodies is not to continue forever. There is to be a resurrection of the dead, and a reunion of the souls and bodies of men. The doctrine of the resurrection was taught by Christ before his death. It was exemplified by him afterwards. He rose from the dead. The doctrine is discussed at length by the Apostle Paul in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. He therein speaks of Christ as "the first fruits of them that slept," and says that since Christ is risen all others will rise. *When* the general resurrection of the dead will take place, no man can tell. This we are told, however, "that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." In the act of raising us from the dead God will make a wonderful change in our bodies. The bodies with which we terminate the present life are "*natural* bodies;" those with which

we shall rise will be "*spiritual* bodies," and thus be suitable to be inhabited by our spirits, in the changed state in which we shall then have our existence.

After the resurrection there will be a judgment. The declaration found in the Third Article of Religion, that Jesus Christ, who now sits at the right-hand of God, will "return to judge all men at the last day," has already been quoted. This declaration is confirmed by the Sacred Scriptures. Paul, in his sermon at Athens, declared that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained;" that is, by Jesus Christ. (Acts xvii, 31.) Again, in writing to the Romans, he says: "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." (Rom. xiv, 10.) John says: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. xx, 11, 12.)

That day will be a momentous one. A description of it was given by Christ himself while he was on earth. All nations shall be gathered before the Judge. The good shall be separated from the bad, and placed on his right hand, while the bad shall be placed on his left. "Then shall the king say unto

them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv, 34, 41, 46.)

These declarations were made by him who himself is to be judge. They are most weighty, and should receive the most thoughtful and prayerful consideration of all who read them or hear of them. Shall we be prepared for that day? Let us look to God for help, so that, when the day shall come, it may not be said to us, "Depart from me, ye cursed," but, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

Chapter X.

THE CHURCH.

THE Church is not an ordinary organization. It was instituted, not by men, but by God. It is defined in the Thirteenth Article of Religion in the following language: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

"A congregation of faithful men" is a congregation of believers in Christ. By bringing the believers together into one organization, it is the design of God to separate and distinguish them from the world, and thus to enable them the better to cultivate and exemplify the principles of righteousness.

The members of the Church are not all equally intelligent in spiritual things, nor equally zealous and faithful. Some are highly appreciative and earnest; others less so. Some are very watchful and prayerful; others less so. Some are purer in their lives than others. But the Church, as a body, has ever been better than the world. If this were not so, then the words of Christ to the disciples, wherein he declared that they were "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth," would be unmeaning.

It is not uncommon in this day to hear, not only the ungodly, but even some persons who profess a high degree of godliness, speak lightly of the Church, and put forth the idea that one can serve God as well out of it as in it. Such persons forget that all the religious light which they have received has come to them through the Church, and that the Church is the only agency that is doing any thing worthy of notice toward ameliorating the condition of mankind. It is as true in this day as it was in the days of Christ that the Church is "the light of the world," "the salt of the earth." It ought not, therefore, to be spoken of in any other terms than those of the highest respect. And whoever is sincerely trying to do God's will is out of his proper place if he is out of the Church; precisely as that one is who, if a member of it, is not trying to do God's will.

Some persons have held the view that in such an organization as the Church—an organization in which the bond of union among its members is love—the members ought not to retain any separate rights of property, but that their temporal possessions ought all to be held in common. Such a state of things did exist for a short time in the early days of Christianity, among the saints in Jerusalem. An account of it is given in the second, the fourth, and the fifth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. It is to be observed, however, that those who entered into this arrangement did not do so from any Scriptural or apostolic requirement, but of their own free wills. There was

no compulsion in the case. Every disciple was at liberty to contribute his property to the common fund, or to retain it in his own possession, as he saw proper. And the example thus set by the saints in Jerusalem, purely voluntary, as it was, was not followed by the saints elsewhere; and very soon the rights of private property were resumed, even in Jerusalem itself. It was with the view of meeting and opposing this doctrine of the obligation or necessity of a community of goods in the Christian Church that the Twenty-fourth Article of Religion was adopted. That Article is in these words: "The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability."

The relation of Christians to civil governments has often given rise to serious discussions. Romanists generally—or, at least, a very large party in the Romish Church—teach that the government of the Church is supreme, and that loyalty to the pope of Rome is of higher obligation than loyalty to any civil authority. The effect of this doctrine, if generally accepted, would be to destroy all purely temporal governments. The Church is a government; but it is a spiritual government, and was not designed to take the place of temporal governments. Both Christ and the apostles recognized obedience to the latter as proper in temporal matters. (See Luke xx, 22-25;

and Rom. xiii, 1-7.) The true doctrine on this subject is set forth in the Twenty-third Article of Religion, and in an explanatory note under it. The Article is for citizens of the United States, and is in these words: "The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the governors, and the councils of State, *as the delegates of the people*, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the constitutions of their respective States. And the said States are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction." The explanatory foot-note declares it to be the duty of Christians generally "to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be."

In connection with this subject is one kindred to it. It is that of taking the oaths required by civil governments. On this subject the Twenty-fifth Article of Religion has this language: "As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle; so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so that it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth." The prophet referred to here is Jeremiah. (See Jer. iv, 2.)

The second clause in the statement of what the

Church is, declares that in it “the pure Word of God is preached.” The Word of God was committed to the Church to be preserved and promulgated by it. This is a most important trust. (Rom. iii, 2.) It is God’s will that the whole world shall have the benefit of the truths contained in that Word; and he has devolved upon the Church the duty of seeing that his will is accomplished. This is to be done in part by the circulation of copies of the Bible throughout the world, but chiefly by means of public preaching. All that has been done thus far in this direction has been done by the Church. What remains to be done must be done, and will be done, by the same divinely appointed instrumentality.

The third clause in this definition of what constitutes the Church is, that in it “the sacraments” are “duly administered, according to Christ’s ordinance, in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same.” The Sixteenth Article of Religion defines the meaning of a sacrament; tells how many sacraments there are, and what are and what are not sacraments, and declares their uses and benefits in the following language: “Sacraments, ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace and God’s good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him. There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, baptism and the Supper of

the Lord. Those five commonly called sacraments"—commonly called sacraments by Roman Catholics and such as imitate them—"that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction—are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the *corrupt* following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of baptism and the Lord's-supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith 1 Cor. xi, 29."

Roman Catholics have not only given the name of sacraments to observances which have not the nature of sacraments, but have perverted the meaning and use of those that truly are sacraments. They have made *them more* than "badges or tokens of Christian men's profession" and "signs of grace and God's good will toward us." They have taught and do teach that the sacraments have a saving efficacy in themselves. They raise up and carry about, in the sight of the people, the elements composing the Lord's-supper, in order that the people may look upon them as upon things possessing some efficacious power in themselves. They also reserve them for the sick. All

this is without warrant of the Scriptures. Romanists are accustomed to offer public prayers, and to administer the sacraments, in the Latin language, even where the people are wholly ignorant of the meanings of the words used. Concerning this custom the Fifteenth Article of Religion has these words: "It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God and the custom of the primitive Church to have public prayer in the Church, or to administer the sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people." In proof of the truth of this declaration we turn to the fourteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, where the apostle uses these words: "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" (Verse 6.) "So, likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air." (Verse 9.) "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (Verses 18, 19.)

Romanism teaches that its ministers, to whom it gives the title of priests, have the power to forgive sins; also, that it is right to worship images and relics and to offer prayers to departed saints. These doctrines are condemned by the Fourteenth Article of Religion in the following terms: "The Romish doctrine

concerning purgatory"—already mentioned—"pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God." In regard to the power of pardoning sins, it was well asked by one of old, 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?' (Luke v, 21.) God has nowhere delegated that power to any mere man; while the worshiping of any object, or the praying to any being but God, is clearly condemned in the first and second of the Ten Commandments. (Exodus xx, 3, 4, 5.)

Romanism forbids its ministers to marry. On this subject the Twenty-first Article of Religion says: "The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life or to abstain from marriage; therefore, it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness." In the early days of Christianity the ministers of the Gospel remained single, or took to themselves wives, as they thought best. Paul remained single. Peter, on the other hand, was married; so were others. This is made plain by Paul's first letter to Timothy (iii, 2); also by his first epistle to the Corinthians. In the latter he says: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (ix, 5.)

While, in regard to things taught and definitely

settled in God's Word, the Church has no authority to make any change, its power is not so restricted with regard to things not so settled; as, for instance, with regard to rites and ceremonies. These are matters of minor importance, and concerning them it is said in the Twenty-second Article of Religion: "It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word." But it is added: "Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren. Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification."

Chapter XI.

BAPTISM—ITS MEANING.

“BAPTISM,” says our Seventeenth Article of Religion, “is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children,” it adds, “is to be retained in the Church.”

We notice, in the first place, the declaration that “baptism is a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized.”

In the days of the apostles all who professed faith in Christ, and took upon themselves the obligations of a life of godliness, were baptized, and no others, of adult age, were regarded as entitled to the reception of the rite of baptism. What was true then has been true ever since; baptism was then, and is this day, “a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized.” No branch of the Christian Church administers the rite of baptism to persons who are capable of understanding the meaning of the ordinance, unless they make a profession of faith and a renunciation of the

world. The Methodist Church requires that a candidate for baptism should respond affirmatively to the following questions before receiving the rite:

“Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them? Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord? and that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary? that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried? that he rose again the third day? that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come again, at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead? And dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost? the holy catholic* Church? the communion of saints? the remission of sins? the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life after death?”

Having responded affirmatively to these questions, the candidate for baptism is asked if he will be baptized in this faith. Having declared such to be his desire, he is asked if he will obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life. His response is, “I will endeavor so to do, God being my helper.”

He then receives baptism as a sign of the profession which he has made, and as a mark of the differ-

* The universal Church.

ence by which believers in Christ are distinguished from unbelievers.

But we notice, in the second place, that baptism "is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth." It is not regeneration, or the new birth itself; nor does the simple fact that one has received it secure to him that great change. It is simply a *sign* of the change.

We have already seen that "regeneration, or the new birth," is the work of the Holy Spirit. This work of the Spirit is called, in the Sacred Scriptures, a *washing*, because by it the heart of the believer is *cleansed*. "According to his mercy," says the Apostle Paul, "he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration, and *renewing* of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii, 5.)

This inward work, so important but unseen, required some outward sign to indicate and represent it to the world. By what outward sign could a work of inward washing, inward cleansing, be so fitly represented as by that of water, the element which is used for all outward washing, all outward cleansing? The water, therefore, that is used in baptism, while it does not effect any change in the spiritual condition of the person baptized, does, most beautifully, appropriately and forcibly, signify the work which the Holy Spirit effects upon the heart of every one that is rightly disposed toward Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world.

In proof that water baptism was designed to have

this meaning, we find that it is constantly mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures in connection with the communication of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, said, when baptizing at the river Jordan, "I indeed baptize with *water*, . . . but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, . . . he shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*." (Matt. iii, 11.) And, as if to illustrate and render impressive the words of John, Jesus presented himself and received *water baptism*, and immediately afterward the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him in the likeness of a dove.

These things took place at the beginning of Christ's ministry. At the end of it, when, after his crucifixion and burial and resurrection, he was about to ascend into heaven, he said to his disciples, "John truly baptized with *water*; but ye shall be baptized with the *Holy Ghost*, not many days hence." (Acts i, 5.)

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to the people, "Repent and be baptized"—he meant, of course, with *water*—"every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the *Holy Ghost*." (Acts ii, 38.)

Philip was preaching at Samaria; many believed, and were baptized with *water*; the apostles at Jerusalem heard the news, and sent Peter and John to Samaria, "who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the *Holy Ghost*; (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid

they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (Acts viii, 15-17.)

When Saul of Tarsus, after the remarkable manifestation of Christ to him on his way to Damascus, had been led into the city, the disciple Ananias was directed by the Lord to go to him. In obedience to the divine command, Ananias proceeded to the house where Saul was, and going in, "and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the *Holy Ghost*. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was *baptized*." (Acts ix, 17, 18.)

Peter went to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, at Cæsarea, and preached Christ to the congregation there assembled. While he was preaching, "the *Holy Ghost* fell on all them which heard the word. . . . Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be *baptized*, which have received the *Holy Ghost* as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts x, 44-48.)

Peter went from Cæsarea up to Jerusalem. The brethren there were astonished and displeased when they learned that he had been at the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, and had communicated the benefits of the Gospel to him. In defending himself, Peter rehearsed the whole matter to them, saying in con-

clusion, "As I began to speak, the *Holy Ghost* fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with *water*, but ye shall be baptized with the *Holy Ghost*." (Acts xi, 15, 16.)

Paul went to Ephesus, and found certain disciples there, and said unto them, "Have ye received the *Holy Ghost* since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any *Holy Ghost*. And he said unto them, UNTO WHAT, THEN, WERE YE BAPTIZED? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the *Holy Ghost* came on them." (Acts xix, 2-6.)

In all these passages the intimate connection between the use of *water* in *baptism* and the gift of the *Holy Ghost* is clearly seen. The one implied the other. If water baptism was administered first, the gift of the *Holy Ghost* was sure to follow; if the *Holy Ghost* was imparted first, water baptism followed. This intimate connection elucidates the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii, 5); the birth being, so far as it is by *water*, *symbolical*, but so far as it is by the *Spirit*, *actual* and *real*.

But, in further proof that water baptism was designed to signify the gift of the Holy Ghost, we have the additional fact that the gift of the Holy Ghost, as well as the use of water in this sacred ordinance, is called a baptism. In giving attention to this fact, it will be necessary to refer again to some of the passages already quoted, emphasizing them in such a way as to render the fact more clear and impressive.

John the Baptist, in the passage quoted from Matt. iii, 11, said: "*I, indeed, baptize you with water, . . . but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;*" thus teaching us that there are two baptisms—the one a baptism of *water*, and the other a baptism of the *Holy Ghost*; the one administered by a mere *man*, and the other by *Jesus Christ*; the one for the *body*, and the other for the *spirit*; the one *visible* and *significant*, and the other *invisible* and *regenerating*. The words of Christ in Acts i, 5, are to the same effect. "For John truly," he says, "*baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.*"

If we turn now to the tenth chapter of Acts, and read again the account of what took place under the preaching of Peter at the house of Cornelius, and then follow the apostle up to Jerusalem, and read again, in the eleventh chapter, what he said in making his defense there, we shall see that he understood the words of Christ, just quoted, as designed to teach the doctrine which it is the present aim to set forth; that is, that water baptism is a sign of regeneration, which is the work of the Holy Ghost. In referring to what

had taken place at the house of Cornelius, he said: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them"—that is, on the Gentiles, at Cæsarea—"as on us at the beginning"—that is, on the Jews, at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost. "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed *baptized with water*, but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*." Several years had intervened between the time of the utterance of these words by Christ and the time of the occurrences at the house of Cornelius; and yet so vivid and permanent was the impression which they had left upon the mind of Peter that, as soon as he saw that God had imparted the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles there present, he remembered them. And, remembering them, he saw at once the intimate connection existing between the two baptisms—the *one* the baptism of *water*, and the *other* the baptism of the *Holy Ghost*. And seeing this connection, he proceeded at once to baptize with *water* those whom God had already baptized with the *Holy Ghost*. He felt, indeed, divinely instructed, by the fact of their baptism by the *Holy Ghost*, to proceed at once to baptize them with *water*; for he said, in continuing his defense, "Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the like gift"—that is, the gift of the Holy Ghost—"as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?"

It has already been shown that there are but two sacraments in the Christian Church, and that these are

water baptism and the Lord's-supper. All Christians are agreed in regard to the meaning of the Lord's-supper; all understand it to have been designed to be commemorative of the death of Christ. All are not agreed in regard to the meaning of water baptism. Some teach that it is commemorative of the burial and resurrection of Christ. According to them, we have two sacraments referring directly to Christ—the one to his death, and the other to his burial and resurrection; and no sacrament referring to the gift of the Holy Ghost. What are those who accept of this view able to do with all those passages which have been quoted, in which water baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost are mentioned together, and with those especially in which the gift of the Holy Ghost is called a baptism? Certainly there was some design in the fact that John said that *he* baptized with *water*, but that *Christ* should baptize with the *Holy Ghost*; in the fact that, when Christ had been baptized with *water*, the *Holy Ghost* immediately afterward descended upon him; in the fact that Christ, just before his ascension into heaven, said to his disciples that John had baptized with *water*, but that they should be baptized with the *Holy Ghost*, not many days thereafter; in the fact that, on the day of Pentecost, Peter, in preaching, said to the people, “Repent and be baptized”—with water, of course—“and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;” in the fact that on that day, when the *Holy Ghost* was poured out in so remarkable a manner, three thousand persons were baptized with *water*; in

the fact that those who believed at Samaria, and were baptized with *water*, shortly afterward received the *Holy Ghost*; in the fact that the *Holy Ghost* was imparted to Saul of Tarsus about the time when he was baptized with *water*; in the fact that, as soon as Peter discovered that the *Holy Ghost* had been imparted to Cornelius and his household, he at once administered *water baptism* to them; in the fact that Paul, having found certain disciples at Ephesus, and having asked them if they had received the *Holy Ghost* since they believed, and having been informed by them that they had not, asked them the question, “Unto what, then, were ye *baptized*?” in the fact that, having learned from these disciples that they had not been baptized in the name of Christ, but only “unto John’s baptism,” Paul taught them the difference between the two baptisms, and that then, being baptized by him in the name of Christ, they at once received the *Holy Ghost*.

It is evident, therefore, that water baptism is, as is stated in the Article of Religion referred to, “not only a sign of profession and a mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized,” but that “it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth;” in other words, that it is a sign of the *gift and work of the Holy Spirit*.

Chapter XII.

BAPTISM—MODE.

THE Methodist Church allows candidates for baptism to choose the mode by which they will receive the ordinance. From this fact some persons have been led to suppose that the Church is indifferent in regard to the mode. This is a mistake. The Church is more concerned that candidates for baptism should have right views of the *meaning* of the ordinance, than that they should be baptized by any particular *mode*; but it is not indifferent in regard to the mode.

Exclusive immersionists seem not to be able to understand the grounds upon which we can allow candidates for baptism to select either one of two or three modes. With them *mode* is *baptism* and *baptism* is *mode*. With us *mode* is *not baptism*, and baptism is *not mode*.

It has already been shown what we understand baptism to mean; that it is “a sign of profession and mark of difference” and “also a sign of regeneration,” or, in other words, a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men. Water is the element that is used in this ordinance. Why was it selected? For the reason, as has been stated, that, since it is

cleansing in its effects when used upon material substances, it most appropriately represents the cleansing efficacy of the Holy Spirit in its work upon the human soul. The essential thing in the administration of the ordinance of baptism, after having a suitable candidate and a proper administrator, is that the element be water. The mode in which the ordinance is administered is of secondary importance. The significant character of the element that is used in the ordinance can not be affected by the mode in which the ordinance is administered. The element is water still, whether it be sprinkled or poured upon the person, or the person be immersed in it, beautiful, significant water. Hence it is that we are able, with perfect consistency, to allow candidates for baptism a choice of modes.

But, while the Church does not deem the mode of the highest importance, it does deem it of *some* importance. While candidates are allowed to have a choice of their own, the Church has, at the same time, a choice of its own; and it reserves to itself the right in all cases of setting its views fully and clearly before candidates for baptism before proceeding to the administration of the ordinance.

The Church derives its preference of mode from its view of the meaning of the ordinance. Water baptism is, as has been shown, the symbol of Holy Ghost baptism. Holy Ghost baptism is, as has also

been made to appear, the *great*, the *heavenly* baptism, the *efficacious* baptism, the baptism that *effects the regeneration of the soul*, the *real* baptism; while water baptism has no other aim nor effect in this connection than that of signifying that most important work. Holy Ghost baptism is the divine baptism; water baptism is the human baptism. "I," said John the Baptist, "I," a mere *man*, "baptize you with *water*; but *he* whose shoes I am not worthy to bear," *he*, the *Son of God*, "shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*."

Seeing, then, that water baptism has no saving nor changing power in itself, but that, besides being a sign of profession and mark of difference, it is a sign of Holy Ghost baptism, it is the view of the Church that it should be the aim to administer it in *such a manner as will cause it to be as fully significant of Holy Ghost baptism as possible*.

If, therefore, there is any *mode* of Holy Ghost baptism, water baptism ought to be made to conform to that mode.

The first Holy Ghost baptism that we read of under the Christian dispensation was that which took place in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost. We have already quoted the words of Christ with reference to it. "John," he said, "baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." These words were uttered by the Savior but a few days before his ascension into heaven,

and, consequently, but a few days before the day of Pentecost. The manner in which this Holy Ghost baptism took place is described by the historian of the event in these words: "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii, 1, 4.)

The disciples, thus strangely affected, were charged by some with being drunken. Peter and the eleven rose up, and made response to this charge in these words: "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, . . . but this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel: and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants, and on my handmaidens I will pour out, in those days, of my spirit." (Acts ii, 15-18.)

Notice the language here used: "I will *pour out* of my spirit"—"I will *pour out* of my spirit *upon* all flesh"—"And *on* my servants and *on* my handmaidens I will *pour out*, in those days of my spirit."

This was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The *mode* was that of *pouring*. The Spirit was *poured out*,

was *poured upon* the disciples. It *came down upon* them. This was in accordance with the words uttered by Christ just before his ascension into heaven: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come *upon* you." (Acts i, 8.)

The mode by which the Holy Ghost baptism took place at the house of Cornelius was the same. While Peter was preaching, "the Holy Ghost *fell on* all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed"—that is, the Jew Christians—"were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that *on* the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts x, 44, 45.)

Shortly afterwards, Peter, in giving an account at Jerusalem of the occurrences which had taken place at the house of Cornelius, said: "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on them*, as *on us at the beginning*. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed *baptized with water*, but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*." (Acts xi, 15, 16.)

It being made clear, then, that the mode of Holy Ghost baptism is that of *pouring*, it is evident that the nearer the resemblance of water baptism be to it, the more beautiful, appropriate, and impressive the rite. The descent of the water upon the head of the candidate is suggestive, in the highest degree, of the source of regenerating and purifying power; that it is to heaven, and not to earth, that we are to look for help for the soul.

Sometimes persons who have given little attention to the subject of baptism, desire to receive the rite by immersion, under the impression that the greater the quantity of water used the safer and the better. Do not such persons, unconsciously it may be, attribute to water an efficacy which belongs, not to it, but to the Holy Ghost? Any reliance upon *quantity*, in respect to the water used in baptism, changes the nature of baptism into that of a saving ordinance. If quantity is any thing, it is a great deal; and, in that case, by increasing it indefinitely, we may do away with the necessity of Holy Ghost baptism altogether.

We should keep clear of any tendency to reliance upon water. The regeneration of the soul must be the work, either altogether, or else not at all, of the Holy Ghost. Water is a *sign*, and nothing *but* a sign, and, therefore, whether little or much be used, there is no efficacy in it. Safety, therefore, in receiving this ordinance, does not lie in the direction of increasing, to any extent beyond the requirements of public propriety, the quantity of water used.

What has thus far been said upon the subject of the mode of Baptism would suffice, were it not for the fact that many exclusive immersionists are in the habit of affirming, in a confident and positive manner, that Christ was baptized by immersion, and of urging those who desire to receive baptism, to receive it in the same way, and thus follow the example of their Savior.

Does any man know that Christ was baptized by immersion? It is not asked if any man *believes* that he was so baptized, but if any man *knows* it. If not, is it wise, is it in good taste, is it just, to affirm positively that he was so baptized?

By reading the third chapter of the gospel of Matthew, the first chapter of the gospel of Mark, and the third chapter of the gospel of Luke, it will be seen, that, at the time when John baptized Christ, he was baptizing very many others also. Undoubtedly the mode by which he baptized the general multitude was the mode by which he baptized Christ. How many others were baptized by him, it is impossible to know. The number was certainly very great. Matthew says, "Then went out to him *Jerusalem*, and *all Judea*, and *all the region round about Jordan*, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." (iii, 5, 6.) Mark says, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him *all the land of Judæa*, and *they of Jerusalem*, and *were all* baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (i, 4, 5.) Luke says, "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (iii, 3); and then presents him as addressing "the *multitude* that came forth to be baptized of him." (iii, 7.)

The number, therefore, who were baptized by him must have amounted to thousands. How, in all probability, were they baptized?

Baptizing by immersion is not a work that is quickly or easily done, as any one who has ever tried it can testify. Leading persons into the water, immersing them, raising them up again, and then leading them out and committing them to their friends, requires time as well as strength. Is it reasonable to suppose that John, even with the assistance which his disciples may have been able to afford him, could have had the time or the strength to baptize by immersion all who went out to him? If not, in what manner could he have baptized them? Was there any manner possible, under the circumstances, which would have required less time and less strength? There was. The probability is that John stood in the edge of the river, and that those who desired baptism came about him, and stood or kneeled, while he poured or sprinkled the water on their heads. In this manner it was possible for him to baptize a large number in a short time, and to continue in the work from day to day, for weeks, without suffering serious exhaustion of strength.

Another reason for supposing that he did not baptize them by immersion is, that to have done so would have necessitated some special preparation, in the way of baptismal robes, on the part of those who were to be baptized, as well as on the part of John himself. While, therefore, no man is able to say with certainty by what mode this multitude and Christ were baptized, one is able to say with certainty that it is highly probable that they were baptized by some other mode than that of immersion.

The probability which exists in regard to the baptisms which were administered by John the Baptist, exists in regard to those which were administered by the apostles on the day of Pentecost. (See Acts ii, 1-41.) Three thousand persons were baptized on that day. It was nine o'clock when Peter began to address the people. How long he continued to speak we know not. Only a part of his sermon—the substance, we suppose—has been handed down to us. The sacred writer, who has given us an account of the events of that day, says, in concluding the abstract of Peter's address, "With many other words did he testify and exhort." (Acts ii, 40.) Considering all the facts and circumstances in the case—the want of previous understanding or purpose on the part either of the apostles or the people; the excitement; the confusion; the difficulty of separating those who desired baptism from those who did not; the necessity of finding some place for the performance of the ceremony; the improbability that the persons baptized would have been baptized by immersion, either without clothing of any kind or in their ordinary clothing; the want of baptismal robes for so many persons; and other things which may suggest themselves to the minds of candid persons—and it will seem altogether unreasonable to suppose that, from the time of the close of Peter's sermon to the close of the day, there was sufficient time, even if there had been sufficient strength on the part of the apostles, for the baptizing by immersion of such a multitude of candidates. They were baptized that day by

some mode; if not by immersion, then by some *other* mode. The probability is, therefore, that they were baptized by *pouring* or *sprinkling*.

Take the case of Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Paul, the apostle. Was he baptized by immersion? Let us see. When Ananias entered into the house where Saul was, the latter was kneeling in prayer. Ananias placed his hands upon his head, and addressed him, informing him that he had been sent to him by Jesus. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." (Acts ix, 18.) This baptism took place at Damascus, in Syria, in a house where Saul was staying. It was administered immediately after Saul had risen from his kneeling posture. He "arose and was baptized." He was undoubtedly, therefore, baptized in the same room where he had been kneeling, and where, of course, there could not have been any provision for immersing persons. He was baptized standing, and, therefore, by having the water applied to him, and not by being immersed in it. He was undoubtedly baptized by pouring or sprinkling.

It is almost equally certain that the Philippian jailer and his household were not baptized by immersion. Paul and Silas were in prison, at Philippi, in Macedonia, several hundred miles distant from Jerusalem. At midnight they "prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all

the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm ; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them, the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Acts xvi, 25-33.) When it is remembered that the hour when these things took place was midnight ; that the jailer had not had the slightest idea, previously, that he would be baptized that night, and that, consequently, there could not have been any preparation for the ceremony ; that not only he, but also all his family, were baptized ; that there was no delay for preparation, and that, consequently, the rite must have been performed in a very simple manner, it seems next to impossible that any one could conceive it reasonable to suppose that the baptisms could have taken place by immersion.

What has been said upon the subject of the mode of baptism may be summed up in the following manner :

1. Water baptism, besides being a sign of profession and mark of difference, is the symbol of Holy Ghost baptism. 2. In order to make it as truly significant of Holy Ghost baptism as possible, the mode by which it is administered ought to be the same as that of Holy Ghost baptism. 3. The mode of Holy Ghost baptism is that of descent. The Holy Ghost is poured out, it falls upon, the person receiving it. 4. Therefore, the most significant and impressive manner in which water baptism can be administered is that of having the water descend upon the head of the person receiving the ordinance. 5. A fair interpretation of the instances referred to, to say nothing of others, seems to teach that this was the usual mode of administering the ordinance in the early days of Christianity.

Chapter XIII.

THE BAPTISM OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

ATTENTION is again called to the declaration contained in the Seventeenth Article of Religion, that "the baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church." The reasons for this declaration are not inconsiderable, but weighty.

The ordinance by which persons were admitted to membership in the Church before the days of Christ was circumcision. The ordinance by which they are admitted to membership now is baptism. The latter ordinance took the place of the former at the time of the commencement of the Christian dispensation, and has continued to occupy that place ever since. The Apostle Paul, in the second chapter of Colossians, speaks of "*baptism*" as the "*circumcision of Christ*," by which he means that baptism answers the ends, as the initiatory rite into the Church, under the Christian dispensation, which circumcision answered under the Mosaic. Consequently, whoever would have been entitled to admission into the Church, previously to the commencement of the Christian dispensation, by the reception of the ordinance of circumcision, must be regarded as entitled to admission into it now by the reception of the ordinance of baptism, unless it can

be shown that a change was made by Christ, by which the ordinance of baptism was to be denied to some to whom the ordinance of circumcision would have been administered.

Young children, as well as older persons, received the ordinance of circumcision, and, by consequence, young children, as well as older persons, are to be regarded as entitled to receive the ordinance of baptism, unless it can be shown that Christ intended that the administration of this ordinance should be withheld from them. Can this be shown? It can not. On the contrary, all that Christ ever did and said while on earth would go to show that no change in this respect was intended by him. The conduct of his disciples, on the occasion when the little children were brought to him that he might touch them, would have been calculated, if he had done nothing to show his disapprobation of it, to lead to the conclusion that little children were about to receive less favorable consideration under the new dispensation than they had been accustomed to receive under the old. "The disciples rebuked those that brought them," endeavoring to keep them and the children at a distance from the Savior. Did Christ give any countenance to their conduct? Or did he let it pass as if it were a matter of indifference to him? He did neither. He showed a positive displeasure at it, and said rebukingly to them : "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whoever shall not receive the kingdom*

of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mark x, 14-16.) If these words and these acts of Christ are to be regarded as having any significance at all, they are to be regarded as teaching that the rights of little children in connection with the Church were designed to be continued in full force under the new dispensation.

The mind of Christ was expressed yet more clearly on the day of Pentecost. Peter, in his sermon on that day, said to the people who had been brought together by the wonderful manifestation of the Holy Ghost, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your *children*." (Acts ii, 38, 39.) This was the first sermon preached under the new dispensation, and it is to be taken as the key-note of every sermon that was to follow. It was not the product of mere human wisdom and human effort. Christ, before his departure, had told his disciples that he would send the Holy Ghost to them, and that, when he should come, he would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance. That promise was now fulfilled; the Holy Ghost had come; and it was under the inspiration which he imparted to the disciples that they acted and spoke on that day. When, therefore, Peter said to the people that the promise was unto them *and to their children*, he was not uttering the mind of Peter, but the mind of Christ. Whoever, therefore, in

preaching the Gospel of Christ, says to parents, "The promise is unto *you*," and fails to say with equal interest and emphasis, "*and to your children*," fails to follow the example set by the first preacher after the ascent of the Savior, and, in so doing, fails to preach the Gospel in all the comprehensiveness of its meaning and aim.

If there is any thing that is clearly taught in the New Testament Scriptures, as well as in the old, it is this, that the door of sacred privileges and blessings is not to be opened to parents, and to be shut in the face of their children. When parents were converted and baptized, under the preaching of the apostles, their children were baptized with them.

We are told of Cornelius, in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house;" that he and all the members of his family were assembled together on the occasion of Peter's going to his house to preach the Gospel to them; and that they were all baptized by that apostle, after they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost. If there were small children there, they were, of course, included in the number who were baptized.

In the sixteenth chapter of Acts we have the account of the conversion of Lydia, of Philippi, in these words: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And when she was baptized, and her *household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." What the age of the youngest member of this family was, we do not know. But this we do know, that Lydia was baptized, and *her household*.

In the same chapter we have presented to us the case of the Philippian jailer, to which we turn again. He said to Paul and Silas, after he had brought them out of the prison, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy *house*. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and *all his*, straightway." Here, again, we do not know the age of the youngest member of the family, but we do know that all the members of the family, young and old, were baptized.

Paul, in the sixteenth verse of the first chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, says: "And I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas."

Objection is made to the doctrine of infant baptism, by its opposers, on the ground that the ordinance of baptism is "a sign of profession." Young children, they say, not being capable of exercising and making a profession of faith, ought not to be baptized. This objection looks very plausible, and has caused many persons who have not been able to see its fallacy, to

turn against the doctrine. But if we "search the Scriptures," we shall see that the objection is founded in error, since, on the same ground, objection might have been made to the circumcising of young children.

Circumcision was as much "a sign of profession" as baptism is. Paul, in writing on the subject of faith, says: "For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the *faith which he had*, being yet *uncircumcised*; that he might be the father of all them that believe." (Rom. iv, 9, 10, 11.)

Here we are taught, in a very clear and explicit manner, that Abraham, having *believed* God, was circumcised with reference to his belief and to the righteousness which was imputed to him in consequence of his belief; and, consequently, that circumcision was for *believers then*, as much as *baptism* is for *believers now*. If, therefore, it would be right to withhold baptism from young children now, on the ground that they are incapable of being believers, would it not have been right to withhold circumcision from young children then, on the same ground? But was circumcision ever withheld from little children on that ground? Never. On the contrary, it is probable that where one person was circumcised who was capable of exercising faith and making a profession of the same, a thousand were circumcised who were not able to distinguish their right

hands from their left. Circumcision was never administered except in connection with the idea of faith; and yet only a very small number of all who were circumcised were capable of exercising faith. The overwhelming majority of all who ever received the rite received it when they were only eight days old. What is the explanation of this fact? Is it that the idea with reference to which circumcision was instituted was ignored in all such cases? Is it that the rite of circumcision was administered where there was no faith? By no means. It is this, that what the children were not able to do for themselves the parents did for them. The children were not able to believe for themselves, and their parents believed for them; and, in so doing, acted in their true and proper relations to their children; for God has clearly made it the duty of parents to think and act for their children until the children become old enough to think and act for themselves.

Baptism is, as has been stated, "a sign of profession." The idea of faith is, and ought to be, always associated with it—*somebody's* faith—the faith of somebody who is *able* to believe; and baptism ought never to be administered where there is *no* faith. But it ought never to be refused where *is* faith. If the child be too young to exercise faith for itself, then the faith of its parents should suffice.

If the objection that little children should not be baptized because they are not able to believe were good, then the objection that they should not be admitted into heaven when they die, because they are

not able to believe, would be equally good; for it is plainly taught in the Scriptures that faith is the condition of salvation, and that those who have not believed are condemned already, *because* they have not believed. But will any person in his senses teach the doctrine that children who die before they are old enough to believe are utterly and eternally lost, and that *because they have not believed*?

It is sometimes asked what benefit a little child receives from baptism. It might be asked, in reply, what benefit a little child received from circumcision. Was its nature changed by it? Was its spirit purified by it? Not at all. Circumcision did not change the heart of Abraham, the first person to whom the rite was administered; for we are told that he was a righteous man before receiving it. Nor did it change the heart of any one of the many millions to whom it was administered afterwards. It was not designed to do so. But would it be proper for any one, therefore, to say that circumcision was useless? Can not God find use for some things, in *connection with* the work of saving souls, which do not possess in themselves *saving power*? The words of the Apostle Paul, already quoted, clearly declare the design of circumcision. It was a "*sign*" and a "*seal*." It saved no soul, it regenerated no soul; but it signified and authenticated much, and as much for little children as for persons of adult age.

What was true of it, is true of baptism. The mere fact of the administration of this ordinance never

saved, never regenerated, the soul of a single person, whether aged or young.

But it is not necessary that the ordinance should be saving, in order to its being beneficial to those to whom it was designed to be administered. And if God designed, as we believe he did, that it should be administered to young children, as well as to adults, it would seem to be the duty of parents to study to know what it is necessary for them to do in order to secure to their children the benefits intended, rather than to reject the ordinance for their children as a useless ceremony because they can not believe it to be saving in its effects.

The benefits intended and possible in connection with the baptizing of a young child are not to be looked for from the mere fact of the application of the water of baptism to the head of the child. There is no merit in the water of baptism more than there is in the water of the clouds or of the brooks. Every thing depends upon the appreciation, the spirit, and the purpose with which the parents present the child, and upon their fidelity, afterwards, to the obligations which they have taken. The proper presentation of a child for baptism implies a public acknowledgment on the part of the parents, in some suitable form of words, that from God the child received its life, that unto God its warmest love and its truest obedience are due, and that to themselves God has committed it, for a time, for oversight and guardianship; and a public and solemn promise that they will, to the best of their ability,

so train it that its character and life shall not bring any dishonor upon the name of God. The obligation under which the parents come—the pledge which they take—and not the application of the water to the head of the child, is the essential thing in infant baptism. The application of the water without the pledge would be of no more value than the application of a seal to a paper on which no agreement had been written and no name signed. No one would think of deriving any benefit from a paper having nothing but the impress of a seal upon it. But from a paper containing an agreement to which a man has signed his name, and which has then been stamped with a seal, one might expect to derive benefit. The application of water to the head of the child, if the fact of the application alone be considered, is the seal applied to the blank paper, and is without benefit. But the application of water to the head of the child, if considered in connection with the solemn obligation under which the parents have come to do certain things for the child, with reference to its relations to God, is the seal applied to a paper on which there is an agreement—signed.

The pledge which the Methodist Episcopal Church requires parents to take when presenting their children for baptism is, that they will teach their children “the nature and end of this holy sacrament;” that they will require them “to give reverent attendance upon the appointed means of grace, such as the ministry of the Word and the public and private worship of God;” and that they will provide that they “read the Holy

Scriptures, learn the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Catechism, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health."

If young children are entitled to baptism, it is the duty of their parents to present them for the reception of this ordinance. They can not present themselves, and when not presented by those upon whom God has devolved the care of them, a privilege secured to them by the death of Christ has been denied to them. But this is true in connection with what has already been said, that baptism is a "sign of profession." The "profession" required is not a profession of mere general belief that Christ is the Savior of mankind, but a profession implying a hearty acceptance of Christ as a personal Savior, and a willingness and a readiness to take upon one's self all the obligations of the Christian life; in other words, all the obligations implied in Church membership. A person who is not already a member of the Church, and is not willing and suitable to take upon himself the obligations of Church membership, is not a proper person to present a child for the reception of the ordinance of baptism, since it is impossible for such a person to perform truly and properly the duties enjoined on a parent of a baptized child.

It is very desirable, in the presentation of a child for baptism, that both parents should be able to take part in the responses; yet the child may be baptized though one of the parents be unprepared to assume the obligations

required. In case neither of the parents is a member of the Church, and neither of them is willing and ready, at the time, to become a member, it is not the duty nor the right of a minister to baptize the child. Baptism is a Church ordinance, and implies Church membership.

But what, it may be asked, of the rights of the child? The rights of the child do not exist, and are not to be considered, apart from the objects and ends for which the Church was established, and apart from the objects and ends for which the ordinance of baptism was instituted. God has placed the responsibility of the parents, with regard to the child, above that of the Church; and the rights of the child exist in connection with its relations to the parents and the duties of the parents to it. The Church can not properly come in between the parents and the child, and can not assume to assist the parents with regard to the child to the extent of baptizing the child, until the parents have given their consent, and that in such sense and in such spirit and with such purpose as will tend to cause the benefits, designed and possible in connection with the proper administration of the ordinance of baptism, to be secured to the child.

When young children have received the rite of baptism, then their relations to the Church, and the Church's relations to them, have been changed. Having had administered to them the initiatory rite of

the Church, they have become—how can it be otherwise?—members of the Church; not full members, nor probationary members, but, certainly, infant members. They have been placed “under the special care and supervision of the Church,” and the Church has now a right to say somewhat in regard to their training, and, at the proper time, to ask them to take upon themselves the obligations of a more advanced Church membership. In the Methodist Church provision is made for this. It is made the duty of every preacher in charge of a Church to “organize the baptized children of the Church, at the age of ten years or younger, into classes, and appoint suitable leaders (male or female), whose duty it shall be to meet them in class once a week, and instruct them in the nature, design, and obligations of baptism, and the truths of religion necessary to make them ‘wise unto salvation;’ urge them to give regular attendance upon the means of grace; advise, exhort, and encourage them to an immediate consecration of their hearts and lives to God, and inquire into the state of their religious experience.”

It is provided, further, that “whenever baptized children shall have attained an age sufficient to understand the obligations of religion, and shall give evidence of piety, they may be admitted into full membership in our Church, on the recommendation of a leader with whom they have met at least six months in class, by publicly assenting before the Church to the baptismal covenant, and also to the usual questions on Doctrine and Discipline.” If they decline, after having

received proper instruction on the subject, and after having had ample time for consideration, to take upon themselves the obligations required, they occupy the position of repudiators of the act of their parents. The fault, in that case, is with them, and not with their parents.

That many persons baptized in infancy have failed to meet the expectations implied in their baptism is made a ground of objection to the baptizing of young children. Such an objection is no more reasonable and proper than would be the objection to the baptizing of adults, on the ground that many persons baptized in adult age have afterwards repudiated their vows, and gone back to the world. It should be the interest and the aim, however, of all the friends of infant baptism that there should be as few cases of the kind as possible. The ordinance itself is right. What is needed is a proper view of it, and earnest, constant, persistent efforts, on the part of all concerned, to meet the requirements and obligations involved in it. *Baptized children have seldom failed, when properly trained, to grow up to be Christian men and women.*

What is said in this chapter of the duties and rights of parents in respect to their relations to their own offspring is true of such persons as providentially have charge of children not their own.

Chapter XIV.

THE LORD'S-SUPPER—ITS MEANING.

THE Lord's-supper was instituted by Christ just before his crucifixion. He had partaken of the Supper of the Passover with his disciples. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. xxvi, 26-29.)

Romanists have put a meaning on these words which Christ did not intend them to bear. Christ evidently meant that they should be taken in a figurative sense. Romanists profess to believe that he meant that they should be taken in a literal sense. When Christ said that the bread was his body, and that the wine was his blood, he evidently meant that the bread *represented* his body, and that the wine *represented* his blood. But Romanists profess to believe that he meant to teach that the bread *was* his body, and that the wine

was his blood ; in other words, that the nature of these elements was so entirely changed that those who partook of them did not partake of bread and wine, but of the very body and blood of Christ ; and that, too, at the very time when he was sitting there before them, speaking to them, and actually handing to them the bread and the wine. And they profess to believe, further, that, although Christ has ascended into heaven, and is now sitting at the right hand of God, a similar change takes place whenever the prayer of consecration is made by a proper person, in the administration of the Lord's-supper. The change which they say takes place at such a time is known by the name of transubstantiation.

In connection with the doctrine of transubstantiation, they hold that the Lord's-supper is a sacrifice ; in other words, that, as often as the Supper is administered, Christ is offered anew for sins. It is in the belief of this doctrine, in connection with their belief in the doctrine of purgatory, that what are called masses are offered by them for the dead. It is in the belief of this doctrine, also, that the bread of the Supper is raised up by the administrator in the sight of the people, in order that they may worship it ; the raising of it up being known among them as the elevating of the host ; that is, of the victim of the sacrifice. With the view that the bread is a part of the body of Christ, newly offered, they hold that whoever partakes of it is saved from his sins ; and, for this reason, they reserve pieces of it for the absent sick.

It is from the idea that the Supper is a sacrifice that the administrator of it is called a priest.

In the administration of the Supper in the Romish Church, the priests, as they are called, partake of both the bread and the wine, while to the people they give the bread only. Their explanation of this is, that either the bread or the wine is a part of the whole of the body of Christ, and that, therefore, the giving of the one of these elements to the people answers the same purpose that the giving of both of them would.

The absurdity of taking Christ's words in this place in a literal sense is seen when we undertake to receive his words in other places in the same sense. He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Was he literally a vine? and were his disciples literally branches? He said, also, that he was "the way," and "the door." Was he literally either a way or a door? He said, moreover, that his Father was a "husbandman;" that is, a farmer. Is God literally a farmer? Christ is called a lion at one time, and a lamb at another. Was he literally either a lion or a lamb? Nobody thinks that he was. The Supper which Christ and his disciples had been eating when he instituted the Lord's supper was in commemoration of the Passover which had taken place in Egypt; and, in consequence, it was called the Passover. Was it the Passover? Not literally. It was only a memorial of the Passover. Whenever the Jews partook of it they thought of the Passover, and blessed God. Christ had the memorial character of this supper in his mind when he instituted

the new Supper. He said, in substance, to those who were with him, "As the Supper which you have just been eating was the Passover—that is, as it represented the Passover—so the bread and the wine in this new Supper are my body and blood; that is, they *represent* my body and blood." No change whatever was implied, by the language used, in the nature of these elements. The bread remained bread, and the wine remained wine; but they were no longer common bread and common wine, because they had been set apart to a most sacred use.

If the doctrine of transubstantiation be untrue, so must the doctrine that Christ is offered anew as a sacrifice every time the Lord's-supper is administered be untrue. But the Scriptures themselves declare that the day of the offering of sacrifices is past. In Hebrews ix, 25–28, we have these words: "Nor yet that he should offer himself *often*, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he *often* have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now *once* in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men *once to die*, but after this the judgment; so Christ was *once offered* to bear the sins of many." And in Heb. x, 11–14, these: "And every priest standeth"—that is, has been accustomed, under the Mosaic dispensation, to stand—"daily ministering, and offering *oftentimes* the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man"—that is, Christ Jesus—"after he had offered

one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by *one* offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Also, 26th verse: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth *no more sacrifice for sins*." If "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," then the Lord's-supper is not a sacrifice, and he that administers it is not a priest. Accordingly, Christ, when about to ascend into heaven, said, not "Go ye into all the world and *offer sacrifices*," but, "Go ye into all the world and *preach the Gospel*;" that is, tell the good news that the *all sufficient, the one true and only sacrifice, has been offered, and that now, since there remaineth no more need of sacrifice, the altars of the world may be taken down and pulpits erected in their places*. The ministers of the Christian religion are not priests. They are either simply preachers of the Gospel, or they are nothing, so far as office in the Church of God is concerned.

If the doctrines just condemned have no basis of truth upon which to rest, neither have those concerning the adoration of the host, the offering of masses for the dead, and the reserving of the elements for the sick. And, as for withholding the wine from the people, this is not only directly contrary to the example of Christ, but is also contrary to the former practice of Romanists themselves.

Some, who do not go so far as to affirm that an actual change of the bread and of the wine into

the body and the blood of Christ is produced by the prayer of consecration, profess to believe that the body and the blood of Christ are introduced, by the prayer of consecration, into the bread and the wine. The doctrine of this class of religionists is known by the name of *consubstantiation*. If the doctrine of *transubstantiation* is false, this must be, also; otherwise those who partake of the bread and the wine do as really partake of the body and blood of Christ as if a complete change took place in these elements.

The true doctrine in regard to the Lord's-supper is that which has already been declared; namely, that the ordinance is commemorative in its character; that is, that it is to be observed in memory of Christ. "This," said Christ, "do in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. xi, 24.) But it commemorates, above every thing else, his death. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. xi, 26.)

The views of the Methodist Church are formally expressed in regard to the nature and meaning of the Lord's-supper in the following terms: "The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves, one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

“Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, can not be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, everthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

“The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

“The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.” (Article XVIII.)

“The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord’s-supper, by Christ’s ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.” (Article XIX.)

“The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.” (Article XX.)

Chapter XV.

THE LORD'S-SUPPER—BY WHOM, AND IN WHAT SPIRIT, TO BE RECEIVED.

THE Lord's-supper, though not what Romanists and some others would have it to be, is far from being an ordinary supper, and is not, therefore, to be administered on any but sacred occasions. It is a supper which is peculiar to the Church. Its proper place of administration is the house of God. Its proper administrator is a minister of the Gospel: by him should the bread be broken, and by him should the wine be poured out. And, to add to the solemnity of the administration of the ordinance, the words of Christ should be used: "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me;" and, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

In the Eighteenth Article of Religion, quoted in the last chapter, it is said that "to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise, the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ."

None "rightly" receive the Lord's-supper but such as have accepted Christ as their Savior, and have given evidence of their faith in him by having received, if it has been reasonably possible for them to do so, the rite of baptism, whereby they have been admitted into union and fellowship with the followers of Christ. Baptism is, as has already been seen, "a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; "it is, therefore, the rite which was designed to be administered to those who are beginning to live the Christian life. The Lord's-supper is the rite which was designed to be administered to those who have already begun to live that life; and the invitation which is given from Methodist pulpits, when the supper is about to be administered, is to be understood to be given to such persons. But while none but the followers of Christ are invited by us to partake with us of the Lord's-supper, the invitation which we extend is designed to include all the followers of Christ who may be present, as well those who are members of other Churches as those who are members of our own Church. In this we differ from Baptists, who, with the exception of those known as Free-will Baptists and probably a few others, do not invite any but such as have been baptized by immersion to commune with them, and do not go beyond the pale of their own Churches to commune with others. Methodism teaches that we should not refuse to sit down at the Lord's table with any who have made a public profes-

sion of faith in Christ, and whose lives give evidence of the sincerity of their profession, although they may not agree with us on all points of doctrine.

But while none “rightly” receive the Lord’s-supper but such as have made a public and formal profession of faith in Christ, if it has been in their power to do so, the receiving of the Supper “worthily and with faith,” implies something more than mere Church membership on the part of the receiver. It implies a sense of need of help, an exalted appreciation of the grace and merit of Christ as the Redeemer and Savior of men, a sincere and earnest desire and purpose to live a life of love, of peace, and of holiness, and a sincere and confident reliance upon the merit and intercession of Christ for salvation.

The words of the invitation already alluded to teach the spirit in which persons are expected to approach the Lord’s table among us. They are these: “If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Wherefore, ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and devoutly kneeling, make your humble confession to Almighty God.”

The effect of the proper observance of this sacrament is to spiritualize our affections and to bring us into more intimate relations with Christ. We say "the proper observance of" it; for the ordinance is not saving in its nature, and the mere fact of one's receiving the sacred symbols can not bring grace to him. To receive any benefit one must come "rightly, worthily, and with faith;" but he who comes in this way comes with a proper sense of his own need, a proper recognition of the infinite goodness and love of the Father, and a proper appreciation of, and a proper reliance upon, the grace and merit of Christ the Savior; in other words, he puts himself properly before God; and whoever does this has a right to expect recognition and blessing at the hands of God.

While no one ought to partake of the Supper who can not partake of it "rightly, worthily, and with faith," no one who can so partake of it ought to fail to do so. Occasionally a person is found who, though sincerely trying, as far as can be judged from all outward appearance, to live in accordance with God's will, declines to accept the invitation to draw near to the Supper of the Lord, on the ground that the ordinance is too sacred for any but the most spiritual of the children of God to receive it. This is an erroneous view of what Christ intended to be a means of grace to all his sincere and faithful followers. The ordinance is not more sacred, certainly, than is Christ himself, who instituted it. And if one has not hesitated, and does

not hesitate, to accept Christ as his Savior, he ought not to hesitate to commemorate the death of Christ, by which his salvation was purchased, in the way appointed by Christ.

Chapter XVI.

DOING NO HARM—AVOIDING EVIL.

WHILE the Sacred Scriptures teach, very clearly and forcibly, the necessity of the possession, by the followers of Christ, of a knowledge of sacred truth, they teach, not less clearly and forcibly, the necessity of the cultivation by them of a spirit of earnestness in their efforts to illustrate that truth by the excellency and beauty of their lives.

With a desire to follow the mind of the Spirit, as thus indicated, the Methodist Church has ever laid great stress upon morality in its members. It has established it as a rule that there shall be "only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into" its fellowship, "a desire," on their part, "to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins;" but it assumes that, "wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits." Hence it expects of all who are admitted into its fellowship that they will evidence, and "continue to evidence, their desire of salvation, first, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced; such as,

"The taking of the name of God in vain." This is forbidden in the Third Commandment, which says:

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” (Ex. xx, 7.) Some persons seem to think that this commandment condemns nothing more than profane swearing. Such is not the case. Any irreverent or even unnecessary use of God’s name is a violation of the commandment. God’s name should never be used when its use can reasonably be avoided, and when used it should be used with the profoundest reverence. It is a sacred name. Christ taught us in the Lord’s Prayer to say, “*Hallowed* be thy name.” All such exclamations, therefore, as “Good God!” “My God!” “Good Gracious!” are improper to be used by any person, but especially by a person professing godliness.

“*The profaning of the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein, or by buying or selling.*” God has said to us in the Fourth Commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Ex. xx, 8–11.) Works of necessity and works of charity and religion God allowed to be done on the Sabbath, but not ordinary works. We may protect

property from injury or loss by fire or flood; we may protect the lives of brute creatures, and, much more, the lives of human beings; we may visit the sick and relieve the afflicted; we may serve God and promote his cause in the sanctuary or elsewhere; but we may not engage in any secular business. Neither may we defer till the Sabbath any secular work that can be done in the week, and then plead necessity for doing it on that day.

“Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.” In regard to drunkenness Christ said: “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.” (Luke xxi, 34.) Paul declares that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi, 10.) He exhorts men, therefore, to walk “not in rioting and drunkenness.” (Rom. xiii, 13.) In regard to the man that helps to make drunkards the Lord spoke thus, in olden times: “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also.” (Hab. ii, 15.) Moderate drinking leads to drunkenness. There is no absolute safety to any man, except in total abstinence from the use of spirituous liquors as a beverage. Only “in cases of extreme necessity” should they be used. The language of the Discipline is approved by Paul’s direction to Timothy: “Use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infirmities.” (1 Tim. v, 23.) Only “a *little* wine,” even in *sickness*, is the apostle’s advice.

“*Slaveholding; buying or selling slaves.*” The spirit and tenor of the Sacred Scriptures are clearly against slavery. The laws of the Old Testament Scriptures forbade the holding of any Jew in bondage for a longer time than six years, and required that, on his being set free at the end of that time, he should not be allowed to go away empty-handed. (Ex. xxi, 2; and Deut. xv, 12-14.) For a violation of these laws at a certain time, God inflicted very severe judgments upon the people. (Jer. xxxiv, 8-21.) The principles laid down in the New Testament Scriptures are more clearly against the institution. The essence of these principles is given in the words used by Christ: “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” (Luke vi, 31.)

“*Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using of many words in buying or selling.*” These things are evidences of an ungodly disposition. The Apostle James asks: “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” (James iv, 1.) Paul says: “Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.” (1 Cor. vi, 5, 6.) Peter advises the brethren to be loving, “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing.” (1 Peter iii, 9.) Paul says, “Let your conversation be without covet-

ousness." (Heb. xiii, 5.) Solomon thus describes the man who desires to purchase an article for less than it is worth: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth." (Prov. xx, 14.)

"*The buying or selling of goods that have not paid the duty.*" When these words were first written, the smuggling of goods into England was quite common, and many persons purchased the goods thus introduced, knowing that they had been smuggled. This sin is less common in this day than it was formerly, though it is not unfrequently practiced now. Many persons, who would not think of taking any advantage of an individual in any private transaction, do not hesitate to take advantage of the civil governments under which they live and by which they are protected. In so doing, they violate the Scriptures. "Let each soul," says Paul, "be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. . . . Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." (Rom. xiii, 1-7.)

"*The giving or taking of things on usury; that is, unlawful interest.*" Different States have different laws on the subject of interest; some allowing higher and others lower rates. What, therefore, might not be usury in one State might be in another. It is the duty of Christians to be obedient to the laws under which they live. (Rom. xiii, 1-7.) The law to the Jew on this subject was, "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to

thy brother." (Deut. xxiii, 19.) Usury evinces and, at the same time, tends to the cultivation of a spirit of avarice, which is contrary to the spirit of Christianity. "For the love of money," says the Apostle Paul, "is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. vi, 10.)

"*Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.*" This is one of the most common and, at the same time, one of the greatest of evils. "The tongue is a little member," but it "is a fire, a world of iniquity; . . . it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." (James iii, 5, 6.) "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James i, 26.) The ministers here spoken of are ministers of state. Many persons feel free to say what they please about public men, and especially about public men not of their own party; condemning them, not unfrequently, on insufficient grounds, and making charges against them which have no foundation in fact. One has no more right to speak unadvisedly of public men than he has of private individuals. A true Christian will try to speak the truth of all men, and to have the truth seasoned with charity when he speaks it. The words of Paul, already quoted, are in place here: "Render, therefore, to all their dues; . . . honor to whom honor." (Rom. xiii, 7.) Peter classes such as

“despise government,” and “are not afraid to speak evil of dignities,” with those who are to be reserved “unto the day of judgment to be punished.” (2 Peter ii, 9, 10.)

“*Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.*” This is general and comprehensive, having respect to all that we say or do in our intercourse with others. The true rule of life is the golden rule, already quoted, given by Christ himself: “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” (Luke vi, 31.)

“*Doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as the putting on of gold and costly apparel.*” By this rule it is not to be understood that the use of gold and costly apparel under any and all circumstances, is intended to be condemned; but the unnecessary, extravagant, and vain use of such things. Whatever is unnecessarily, extravagantly, and vainly put upon our persons diminishes our ability to contribute to the causes of charity and religion, ministers to an unbecoming spirit in ourselves, and gives offense to the humble poor. The adorning taught in the Sacred Scriptures is not that “of gold”—gold in the ears and on the fingers, for instance—nor “of apparel”—apparel that is purchased for show more than for use, and purchased, perhaps, at the expense of peace and justice—but “of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.” (1 Peter iii, 3, 4.) Paul advises women to adorn themselves “with good works” rather than with “gold, or pearls, or costly array.” (1 Tim. ii, 9, 10.)

“The taking of such diversions as can not be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Under this head may be embraced dancing; visiting the theater, the circus, the horse-race, and other shows and displays of like character; card playing; billiard playing; betting; buying lottery tickets; and other things of similar nature and tendency. These are all purely worldly in their character, and injurious to the Christian life. “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.” (Eph. iv, 17.) “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. iii, 2.)

“The singing of those songs, or the reading of those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.” Whatever does not tend to the knowledge or love of God is clearly opposed to God and to the life of godliness. Every book and every song that tends in any degree to weaken the faith, the love, the hope, the zeal, the purpose, the patience of a soul is of this class, and is, therefore, to be rejected. “Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts.” (Psa. li, 6.) “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Phil. iv, 8.)

“Softness and needless self-indulgence.” In Amos a woe is pronounced against them that are at ease in Zion. (Amos vi, 1.) The Christian life is not a life

in which one's own ease or comfort is to be sought. Said Christ, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," (Mark viii, 34); and the apostles everywhere teach the necessity of the greatest possible diligence on the part of the followers of Christ.

"*Laying up treasure upon earth.*" This rule is based upon the words of Christ: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." (Matt. vi, 19, 20.)

What is meant is, not that a man should not own any property here, but that he should not make the accumulation of property his great aim in life—should not set his affections on it as the chief good; "for where your treasure is," said Christ, "there will your heart be also." (Matt. vi, 21.) The true end of human existence is the glory of God. The time, the talents, and the temporal possessions of men ought to be used in promoting the cause of God among men. Rev. John Wesley, with this important end in view, made it a rule to make all he could, honestly, to save all he could, and to give all he could.

"*Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.*" Doing the things here condemned may sometimes be the result of miscalculation. It seldom fails to end in dishonesty. The Christian should be the most

careful of all men in regard to all his business affairs. Christianity does not raise its adherents above the ordinary obligations of life; on the contrary, it holds them to the strictest performance of those obligations. Any disregard of the principles of just dealing generally accepted among men, or even any carelessness in regard to them, on the part of a professed follower of Christ, tends to bring the character of the person, and, at the same time, the character of Christianity itself, into disrepute. "Provide things honest in the sight of all men," is the injunction of the Apostle Paul. (Rom. xii, 17.) The same apostle exhorts the followers of Christ to "walk honestly, as in the day." (Rom. xiii, 13.)

Chapter XVII.

DOING GOOD.

BUT the Scriptures teach the necessity of a positive, as well as of a negative, righteousness, on the part of Christians; and the Methodist Church, in harmony with this fact, requires that its members shall give evidence of their desire for salvation, not only "by doing no harm," and "by avoiding evil of every kind," but also "by doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men."

"To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting them that are sick or in prison." When Christ was on earth his life was rendered beautiful by the kindness, the tenderness, the compassion, which he displayed toward persons in distress. He was strength to the weak, feet to the lame, ears to the deaf, eyes to the blind, health to the sick. He "went about doing good." No one ever appealed to him in vain. No one ever showed any disposition to receive needed help at his hands, without being helped. He was "full of grace." He carried sunshine and happiness with him wherever he went. His life was a new lesson to men—a lesson of

humanity. His life is our example. The more of humanity we have, the more of the mind of Christ we have, and the more perfectly do we resemble him. He taught his disciples to cultivate this mind. "Blessed," said he, "are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. v, 7.) "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Verse 42.) In teaching them to cultivate a spirit of kindness, he taught them to cultivate it toward all persons. He said to them: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Verses 43, 44.) The Gentile at whose house the second great outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place, was the man who "gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." His alms and his prayers went up "for a memorial before God." (Acts x, 2, 4.)

"Remember," says the Apostle Paul, "them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." (Heb. xiii, 3.) The Apostle James, who did not accept any man's profession of faith unless it was accompanied by works, says: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James i, 27.)

"To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting

all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that 'we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.'" God has laid great stress upon the truth. Christ said to certain ones, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii, 32.) It is the duty of the children of God to rejoice in the truth, and to endeavor to spread it abroad as much as possible. A man is under the same obligation to impart instruction, reproof and exhortation to those with whom he has intercourse, when they need these things, that he is to furnish them with bread when they need it. It was written of old (Deut. viii, 3), and Christ repeated it, that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. iv, 4.) The Psalmist recognized the obligation which rests upon a child of God to teach others, in these words: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." (Psa. li, 12, 13.) Paul charged Timothy, and in charging him he has charged us all, to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. iv, 2.) It is the privilege of every one, in this way, to become a preacher of righteousness.

"By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more because the world will love its own, and them only." This rule is supported

by the words of Christ and of the Apostle Paul. Christ said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John xv, 19.) And Paul says, "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. vi, 10.) The followers of Christ have sometimes suffered loss in business in consequence of the opposition of the world. The object of this rule is to prevent this, as far as possible.

"By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed." Godliness is opposed to slothfulness. The Scriptures everywhere teach industry, and industry with the greatest diligence and zeal. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." (Eccles. ix, 10.) Godliness is not less opposed to extravagance and waste. Christ forcibly taught the necessity of frugality, when, after having miraculously fed the five thousand, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." (John vi, 12.)

"By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily, submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil against them falsely for the Lord's

sake." The Christian life is the noblest life ; and therefore the greatest effort is required on the part of him who lives it to live it worthily. It is a race for the highest honor and the highest glory, and we are exhorted to run the race "with patience." (Heb. xii, 1.) It requires cross-bearing and self-denial. "If any man will come after me," said Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke ix, 23.) Men ought to speak well of the Christian. They do not always do so. He is compelled at times to bear "the reproach of Christ." (Heb. xi, 26.) Nay, sometimes he is hated and scorned by the world. "We are made," says the Apostle Paul, "as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things." (1 Cor. iv, 13.) Christ was reviled by those who hated him, and he said, "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Matt. x, 25.) But while warning his followers of what they might expect from the ungodly, he at the same time comforted and encouraged them. "Blessed," said he, "are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. v, 11, 12.)

Chapter XVIII.

ATTENDANCE UPON THE ORDINANCES OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.

THE Church expects all who are in its fellowship further to evidence their desire for salvation “by attending upon all the ordinances of God: such are, The public worship of God; The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; The Supper of the Lord; Family and private prayer; Searching the Scriptures; and Fasting or abstinence.” A part of these duties are for public and a part for private observance. Only those which are for public observance will be noticed in this chapter. They are these:

1. “*The public worship of God.*” Ordinarily the phrase “public worship” is used to signify all the public services of the house of God. In this place it is used in a more restricted sense—in the sense of public prayer and public praise. Public prayer was instituted at the time of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Previously, the nearest approximation to it was family prayer, the head of the family leading in the service. At that time, however, God directed that a tabernacle should be built, and that a public altar should be erected, for the congregation;

and at the same time established a public priesthood, whose duty it should be to offer sacrifices and to make confession and supplication for the people. Probably public praises began to be sung at the same time. We know that one grand hymn of praise had been sung at the Red Sea. In the days of David the singing of praises became a prominent part of the public worship. It has continued to be a prominent part of it ever since.

Christ taught his disciples, by his own example, to take part in these acts of worship. He both prayed and sang with his followers. After his departure they assembled together; "and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place," worshiping God, and waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of the gift of the Comforter; and it was while they were thus assembled and thus engaged that the Holy Ghost was imparted to them.

It is a fact, therefore, worthy to be remembered, that the first great outpouring of the Holy Ghost under the Christian dispensation was an outpouring upon a congregation of worshipers, and not upon separate individual followers of Christ. We learn from this that the richest and most abundant spiritual blessings are to be expected by assembled multitudes.

It is the duty, therefore, as well as the privilege of the followers of Christ to be present at these services, and not only to be present at them, but to take part in them. This can be done, so far as public prayer is concerned, only by yielding the soul to the spirit of the

prayer, seconding its confessions, its thanksgivings, and its supplications, silently or by approving responses. In the service of public praise all who have voice can unite. "Let the people praise thee, O God," says the Psalmist; and then, as if to give no excuse for leaving this part of the service to a few, he adds, "Let *all* the people praise thee." (Psa. lxvii, 5.) His very last words were: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." (Psa. cl, 6.) The Discipline says, "As singing is a part of divine worship in which all ought to unite, therefore exhort every person in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only."

2. "*The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.*" The priests and the Levites were the first religious teachers among the Jews; but their work of teaching was secondary to their work about the altar. In the course of time other teachers sprang up; and after the Babylonish captivity the work of teaching became quite prominent. Every synagogue had its rabbi, who was a public teacher, and on every Sabbath the Sacred Scriptures were read and expounded by him in the hearing of the people, in connection with the services of prayer and praise. Christ appointed, as the public teachers of the new dispensation, ministers of the Gospel. He gave them their commission just before his ascension, in these words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi, 15.) Their work began on the day of

Pentecost. It has continued, more or less earnestly and effectively, from that day to the present. By means of it; chiefly, has the cause of Christ been promoted among men; and by means of it, chiefly, is the work of the full, complete, and final establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth to be accomplished. The Church could not be sustained in the simplicity of a true Christian faith and character without it. Whenever and wherever the work of the preacher has been made of secondary importance in the house of God, the spirit of true religion has declined, and the people have been led into errors and superstitions. Christ knew the necessity for this work, and hence its institution by him under the most solemn and impressive circumstances. Nothing can take its place.

The object of this work is, not only to instruct men in the principles of the Christian religion, but also to keep them constantly reminded of their needs, of their duties, of their obligations, of their privileges; and constantly stimulated in the pursuit of truth and holiness. It is the divinely appointed way of enlightening the world, and of establishing the Church in righteousness; and no one who professes faith in Christ can neglect it without unfaithfulness to the obligations of a Christian life, and injury to his own soul. The instrument in this work is human, but the message is divine, and every reverent attendant upon the delivery of the message helps to make it more effective, and thus, in a certain sense, becomes a minister of the truth himself.

3. "*The Supper of the Lord.*" It has already been shown, that, while baptism is the sacrament which is administered to those who offer to connect themselves, by a profession of faith in Christ, with the people of God, the Lord's-supper is the sacrament which is administered to those who have already become thus connected with them. Baptism is a privilege offered by the Church to penitent believers who stand at its door, asking admission into its fellowship; the Lord's-supper is a privilege reserved for those who have passed through the door.

Baptism was designed to be administered once; the Lord's-supper frequently. The phrases, "as oft as ye eat," and "as oft as ye drink," leave it to the followers of Christ themselves to say how often they will partake of this sacred ordinance. Love to God and to Christ should induce every one who has professed faith in Christ to partake of it as often as the opportunity for so doing is afforded. The Methodist Church expects this of all persons whom she receives into membership in her communion.

The mind of the Spirit on the subject of attendance upon the ordinances of the house of God is expressed in these words: "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. x, 24, 25.)

Chapter XIX.

FAMILY AND PRIVATE DEVOTIONS.

BUT public religious services, however important, can never serve as a substitute for family and private devotions. These, as has already been stated, were observed before public services were instituted. All the patriarchs observed them. And the observance of them did not cease after the institution of public services. The institution of the latter was an addition to, not a substitute for, the former. Joshua, toward the close of his life, in speaking to the people on the subject of their relations and duties to God, said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," meaning thereby that, even if all the rest of the people should neglect the service of the Lord, so that there should cease to be a public altar, a public priesthood, public sacrifices, and public prayers and praises, he and his household would still continue to worship and serve God.

Family and private devotions are necessary to the keeping up of religion in the family and in the souls of individual men and women. Our religion will be little better than a name, if we do not cultivate it daily, by prayer, by searching the Scriptures, and, from time to time, by fasting or abstinence. Fasting

or abstinence can not purify the soul, but it tends to bring us to a remembrance of our dependence upon God.

The first thing that a Christian should do after rising from bed in the morning, should be to remember God, and to bow down before him, and make grateful acknowledgments to him for his protecting care during the night; and the last thing that a Christian should do at night, should be to bow down before God, and thank him for the mercies of the day, ask his pardon for any sins committed, and invoke a renewal of his watchful care and protection for the night; connecting with each act of devotion of this kind, the reading of one or two chapters in the Sacred Scriptures. He ought, also, to thank God, at the table, and invoke his blessing upon the food of which he is about to partake. How, otherwise, can he expect to be sustained and comforted from day to day, in the midst of the difficulties, the cares, and the temptations of life?

Such ought to be the course of every follower of Christ. But the heads of families owe a duty, in this respect, not only to themselves, but also to those whom God has committed to their care and guidance. In discussing the subject of the baptism of young children, the responsibility of parents for the proper care and training of their children was spoken of. Who can properly estimate the magnitude of that responsibility? The words of instruction, exhortation,

and command which we utter to our children will be of little avail, if we fail to show, by our example, that we are in love with the religion which we endeavor to lead them to cultivate. If we say to our children that they ought to love God, ought to take his word as a lamp to their feet and as a light to their path, ought to take pleasure in his service, our words will seem idle, unless we show by our acts that we, ourselves, love God, that we take his word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, that we take pleasure in his service.

Who can tell how many children have been lost to virtue, to honor, and to God, from the homes of parents professing to love God, in consequence of the absence of the family altar, and the failure to make the word of God prominent in the reading of the family circle? And who can tell, on the other hand, how many have been saved, by means of influences of this kind, who would, otherwise, have been lost?

Family and private religious services are the surest tests of piety. Attendance upon public religious services may be kept up for a long time, from motives of policy or from mere habit, when a spirit of devotion no longer exists. But family and private devotions are not likely to be continued for a long time after the love of God has ceased to exist in the soul. The motives for the observance of the forms of religion in the privacy of one's own home are fewer and simpler than they are for the observance of the forms in the house of God; and one may begin to suspect that the love of God is dying out in his soul when he finds himself

strongly inclined to neglect the family altar and the Word of God, or to cease to make his devotions to God, night and morning, where none but God and the members of his own family can see him.

Chapter XX.

FINANCES — THE SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL AND
THE BENEVOLENT ENTERPRISES OF
THE CHURCH.

THERE has never been a time when there has not been need of money to sustain the institutions of the Church. It would be easy to say that God could sustain them in a miraculous manner. But it is an undoubted fact that he has not seen proper to do so, but that he has deemed it best to lay the burden of this work upon the shoulders of those who profess to love him. It is one way in which he enables them to afford evidence of their love to him, and to convince the world that there is a motive power in Christian experience which excels any other.

A certain percentage of every man's income was required under the Mosaic dispensation. While such is not the case under the Christian dispensation, there is no upward limit, any more than there is a downward limit, to the amount that a person may give to promote the cause of Christ. There are two things to be considered in all our giving; the one is the greatness and urgency of God's claims upon us, and the other our ability. Our ability must depend upon various things. No rule can be laid down either as to the

amount or as to the percentage of income to be given by any two men. This principle, however, is clearly taught in the Scriptures; that is, that a man should feel what he gives. It is best expressed in the words of David, when he desired to make an offering unto the Lord, at the threshing-floor of Araunah. Araunah offered to give to David all that he needed, to enable him to make a suitable offering unto the Lord. David refused to accept the gift, saying, "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." (2 Sam. xxiv, 24.) The first object to which the Christian is called upon to contribute is

THE SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL. Without this, the life of the Church could not be sustained. In the Methodist Church "an estimating committee, consisting of three or more members of the Church," is appointed by the last quarterly conference of each pastoral charge, in each conference year, whose duty it is, "after conferring with" the preacher who may be appointed as pastor of the charge for the succeeding conference year, "to make an estimate of the amount necessary to furnish a comfortable support" to him, "taking into consideration the number and condition" of his family, and report the estimate thus made to the first quarterly conference of the new year, for its approval or alteration. To the amount thus fixed for the support of the preacher in charge the amounts

apportioned for the support of the presiding elder and the bishops are added ; and then it is made the duty of the stewards of the Church to “provide by such methods as they may judge best to meet” these claims.

In different congregations different methods are pursued. The aim should be, and usually is, to divide the burdens of these claims as equitably as possible. No method that could be adopted could be effectual in securing exactly what would be just and right from each member of the Church and congregation. It will always be the case that some members will contribute more and others less than their just proportion of what may be needed. No one but God is able to know exactly what each one ought to give. In some of our Churches a large part of the amounts thus needed is derived, through the hands of the trustees, from the rent of the pews. This is not generally the case, however ; the most of our Churches depend upon the voluntary contributions of the people for the support of the Gospel. Usually the stewards of the Church, or a committee appointed for the purpose, who know the amounts required, and also the relative abilities of the different members of the Church and congregation, say what they think each individual is able and willing to pay, and then leave the matter, for final judgment and decision, to the individual himself. Practice and experience have shown that the easiest way, for all concerned, of paying the amount thus agreed to is by weekly offerings, in envelopes distributed for the purpose.

The expenses of the Sunday-schools are usually met by means of collections taken up in the schools. The methods adopted for raising the amounts necessary to meet the expenses of sexton's hire and of fuel and lights are various. These all have to be met in some way, however; and the simplest and most direct way has usually been found to be the easiest and the best.

THE BENEVOLENT ENTERPRISES OF THE CHURCH.

One of the great objects for which the Church was established was that it might be an instrument in the hands of God in the redemption of the world from its ignorance, its sin, and its misery. And every Church organization that has the mind of Christ must, in the nature of things, be a working Church, and must have something more in view than the mere maintenance of its own existence. The Methodist Episcopal Church desires to do its part in promoting the accomplishment of the will of God among men; and to this end it has established, and is endeavoring to sustain, several benevolent enterprises. They are as follows:

1. *The aid of worn-out preachers and of the widows and children of deceased preachers.* Methodist preachers have rarely been so fortunate as to receive for their services more than a bare sufficiency for their immediate temporary necessities. Very few of them have ever been able to lay up any thing for old age, while many of them have suffered, in consequence of inadequate support, even in the years of their greatest

activity and strength. The result has been that many of them have felt the pinches of extreme poverty in their old age, and, in dying, have been compelled to commit their families to the charity of relatives and friends. It is with the view of relieving, as much as possible, the necessities of such persons that the Church has directed the raising of annual collections for their benefit. The amounts raised are small compared with the number and wants of the beneficiaries. Each annual conference receives the amounts raised within its own bounds, and distributes them according to the necessities of the claimants on its list. The claims are usually placed at the lowest possible amount, and even then are rarely ever met in full. What each claimant receives goes but a very little way toward affording him or her an actual support.

It should be a pleasure to every member of the Church who places any value upon the services of the ministers of Christ in general, and especially to every one who remembers with pleasure the services of those at whose hands he has received spiritual benefit, to contribute liberally to this worthy object.

2. *The Missionary Society.* The cause of missions is the cause of Christ. The last command that Christ gave, before ascending into heaven, was that the Gospel should be preached among all nations. The Methodist Church was, in its birth, a missionary Church, and it has from the first been distinguished for its missionary spirit. It has ever sought to carry the Gospel to those to whom it had not been preached.

But, besides doing what it can in this direction, by general efforts it seeks to aid in the accomplishment of this end by means of a society known as the "Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." This society was organized in 1819. Its operations have been carried on by means of collections taken up annually in our congregations and Sunday-schools, the Sunday-schools being organized into Sunday-school missionary societies. The work of the society was at first small. It has gradually enlarged until it has attained to very great proportions. By means of it the Methodist Episcopal Church has been established in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, and in the most remote parts of our own land. The progress of the work has been especially rapid during the last twenty or twenty-five years, and the prospect is that it will be more rapid in the years to come. New fields are opening up almost every year. Men qualified to occupy these fields are constantly offering their services to the society. What is needed is the money with which to send these men forth and support them. This must be contributed by the friends of the cause; in other words, by the friends of Christ who are connected with our Churches and congregations.

3. *The Sunday-school Union.* This society was organized in 1827. It was reorganized in 1840. Its objects are the advancement of the interests and the promotion of the cause of Sunday-schools in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. By means of the collections taken up for it annually in our con-

gregations, it aids in establishing Sunday-schools in places where they have not already been established, in sustaining feeble schools by supplying them with books and requisites, in diffusing Sunday-school intelligence throughout the Church, and in otherwise promoting the cause of Sunday-school instruction.

4. *The Tract Society.* The object of this Society is the publication and distribution of a cheap religious literature in the form of tracts. These tracts contain important truths, and are the means of accomplishing much good. Every Church that takes up "a collection for the Sunday-school Union and the Tract Society, contributing an equal amount to each, and forwarding the same to the Treasurer, at New York," is "entitled, upon the order of the pastor, to one-third of the whole amount of the two collections in tract publications for gratuitous distribution, provided that this order be sent within six months after the collection is taken."

5. *The Church Extension Society.* This Society was organized in 1864. The object of it is to aid feeble congregations in the erection of houses of worship, and embarrassed congregations in redeeming from debt houses already erected. It does this partly by donations, and partly by loans. It has been the means of affording the benefits of regular and stated ministrations of the Gospel to many hundreds of localities where without its aid these benefits would not have been enjoyed, and of securing the continuance of these benefits in many localities where except for its aid,

they would have ceased to be enjoyed. Its work is not confined to any particular parts of the country; its helping hand has been extended to all parts of the land, though its greatest benefits have been realized in the North-west, the West, and the South. It has strong claims upon the liberality of the members and friends of our Church. Every pastor is required to take up a public collection for its support annually.

6. *The Freedmen's Aid Society.* This society was organized in 1866. It has for its object, primarily, the education of the colored people of the South. To this end it has established various institutions of learning in the South. These institutions are annually sending out young colored men and women more or less highly educated to spread the influences of education among the less fortunate of their own race. Some of the young men sent out devote themselves to the work of preaching the Gospel, while many of both sexes become teachers. The General Conference of 1880 so interpreted the constitution of this society as to make it possible for schools for the whites in the South to be aided from its funds, in so far as this could be done without detriment to the schools established and sustained by it for the colored people. The work of the society is highly important, not only in respect to the interests of the Church, but also in respect to the interests of the country. A collection is required to be taken up, in aid of its funds, in all our Churches annually.

7. *The Cause of Education.* In 1866 collections were

taken up for this cause. In 1868 a Board of Education was created, whose duty it was made to receive the funds thus raised, together with all other moneys which might thereafter be raised for the same purpose, and to expend the interest accruing on the same, from year to year, in aiding young men who might be preparing themselves for the ministry. In addition to what is raised in the public congregations for this cause, collections are taken up in our Sunday-schools on the second Sunday in June, in each year, in aid of the "Sunday-school Fund" of the Board of Education. The day thus set apart is called "Children's Day."

8. *The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.* This society was organized in 1869. It seemed to be a necessity, as an auxiliary to "The Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." In certain Asiatic countries, the native women seldom appear in public, and, hence, seldom hear the Gospel preached. If they come to a knowledge of Christ at all, it must be by hearing the Scriptures read and explained to them in the privacy of their own homes. To meet this difficulty, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized. The society sends out to those countries young ladies as teachers and Bible readers, with the view of reaching this class of persons. Some of the young ladies sent out by the society enjoy the advantage of having graduated at medical colleges in this country. This gives them the more easy access to the persons whom they wish to reach. The society

has already accomplished much good, and is likely to accomplish much more. The funds of this society are raised, not by collections in the Churches, but by private methods. This method has been adopted in order that there may not be two collections taken in the Churches for the cause of Missions, and that the new society may not, to any extent, take the place of the old in its claims upon the liberality of the congregations.

9. *The American Bible Society.* The enterprises already named are under the management and control of the Methodist Episcopal Church. There is another society which, though not under its management and control, it is proper to place in the list of its benevolent enterprises. It is "The American Bible Society." This society is supported by several of the evangelical denominations of Christians in the United States, of which the Methodist Episcopal Church is one. The translation of the Scriptures which it uses is the one in common use among English-speaking Christians. There is a Bible Society in this country which publishes a translation of the Scriptures with the word *immerse* substituted for the word *baptize* in every place in which the latter occurs in the common translation. This society is known by the name of "The American Bible Union." Its friends have sometimes endeavored to leave the impression upon the minds of those not well informed on the subject that in some way the Methodist Episcopal Church has something to do with the work of the "Union." This is a mistake. The

only Bible Society for whose work the Methodist Episcopal Church is, to any extent, responsible, is the American Bible Society. To this society it gives its countenance, and in aid of the work of this society collections are taken up in many of our congregations annually.

Occasionally appeals are made to the liberality of the members of our Churches and congregations in aid of other objects, but the objects which have been named are the ones for which appeals are expected to be regularly and statedly made.

It is not to be supposed that every member will be able to contribute much to each of these objects. All that is expected is, that each one will contribute according to his ability. It is well for each member to look over the list, at the beginning of each conference year, and to form an estimate of what he will most likely be able to contribute to each of the objects during the year, and then to endeavor to give the amounts estimated, as the claims of the objects are presented.

Chapter XXI.

THE HISTORY OF METHODISM.

FORMERLY the Romish Church held sway in England, and the authority of the pope, its head, was recognized there by people and king. In 1535 the authority of the pope was repudiated, and a separation took place, by which the Church in England became independent of the Church of Rome, with the king as its temporal head.

But as the separation was the result less of doctrinal and spiritual than of personal and political considerations, the Church in England did not differ greatly after the separation from what it had been before. In name it was a new Church, the Church of England; but in its spirit and practices it still bore a striking resemblance to the body from which it had separated. The antagonisms which existed between the two Churches, together with the spirit of the Reformation which was abroad, tended to give to the new organization a new character, but the improvement was of slow progress, so that, even at the end of two hundred years from the time of the separation, there was still great need of a reformation among the people and the clergy of England.

The men who were raised up by Providence to be

the chief instruments in inaugurating and carrying forward this important work were the Revs. John and Charles Wesley and the Rev. George Whitefield. The Rev. John Wesley was born A. D. 1703, and his brother Charles A. D. 1708. They were sons of a clergyman of the Church of England. The Rev. George Whitefield was born A. D. 1714; he was the son of an innkeeper in Bristol. All three were graduates of the University of Oxford, and all three men of marked piety and ability. The Rev. John Wesley was a man of very deep and extensive learning, of a very magnanimous, earnest, and self-sacrificing spirit, and of very distinguished administrative abilities. His brother Charles was not less scholarly, but was more ardent as a public speaker, and was wonderfully gifted as a writer of sacred hymns. Whitefield, the youngest of the three, was less scholarly than either of the others, and less able in the management of affairs, but excelled in pulpit eloquence.

John Wesley, being the eldest of the three, graduated first, and was at once elected to a fellowship, and appointed to take charge of certain important classes in the university. In 1729, while occupying his fellowship and engaged in the work of instructing his classes, he, his brother Charles, who was then a student in the university, and two other young men, likewise students, began to devote a certain part of their time every week to the study of the Greek Testament. Very soon they began to visit the Oxford prison, for the purpose of imparting religious instruction to its inmates;

and then they added to this work that of hunting up the poor and the sick, with the view of relieving, as far as they were able, the necessities of such persons, and of affording to them the consolations of religion.

After a short time, other students were added to the little society, and it began to attract attention, and to be styled, in derision, by those who did not sympathize with its members in their pious works, "the Holy Club," while to its members the title of "Methodists" began to be applied.

John Wesley, on account both of his maturer age and of his superior qualifications for the position, was recognized by the members themselves, and also by others, as the leader of the little band.

The opposition to the society was, at times, very great—so great, indeed, that some of its members became discouraged, and ceased to take part in its work. The Wesleys and a few others stood firm, believing that they were in the way of duty, and, therefore, in the way of the divine approval and blessing.

In 1735 the Wesleys were solicited by Governor Oglethorpe to go with him to Georgia, in company with a body of emigrants that he was about to take thither to strengthen a colony that had been established there in 1733. Hoping to find in the New World, among the colonists and the Indians, a field in which their ardent zeal might have ample room for exercise, they yielded to the solicitations of the governor, and set sail for America.

Whitefield, who had previously to this time entered

the university, and had become an earnest and ardent member of "the Holy Club," was left as its leader on the departure of the Wesleys for their new field of labor.

The expectations of the Wesleys were not realized in Georgia. It soon became evident that the colony was not a suitable place for their labors. They suffered many hardships and vexations, and accomplished almost nothing with the Indians, and very little more with the colonists. Charles returned to England at the end of twelve months, and John at the end of twenty-seven.

But though their going to Georgia had seemed to be almost without appreciable results, so far as their labors as missionaries there were concerned, it was, nevertheless, in the end, to prove not to have been without benefit to themselves. Among the emigrants with whom they had made the voyage thither were some members of the Moravian Church. From their observation of the conduct of these persons during a storm, and from conversations with them afterwards, both on shipboard and on shore, the brothers had become convinced that there is a depth of religious experience possible to Christians to which they themselves had not attained, and they had at once begun to seek it.

While their minds had been thus exercised in Georgia, Whitefield's mind had been exercised in the same way in England, and some little time after the return of Charles, but before the return of John, he

had realized the joys of the richer and deeper experience toward which the three had been tending.

John Wesley returned to England with his mind almost wholly occupied with thoughts on this important subject. He found Whitefield gone to America, on an invitation extended to him by himself just before he had made up his mind to leave Georgia. He turned his thoughts to the Moravians, and immediately set off for Herrnhut, the principal place of their residence, in Germany, where he spent several weeks, mingling and worshiping with them, and studying their doctrinal views and their religious life.

Only a short time elapsed, after his return from Germany, before both he and his brother Charles experienced that for which they had been seeking. Their hearts became more ardently warmed with love to God, and their religious duties were transformed into religious pleasures.

Meanwhile Whitefield, having found, on reaching Georgia, that his friend had returned to England, remained there but a short time, and was now on his way home. Very soon he and the Wesleys were together, rejoicing in the same experience of a deep and tender love to God.

They began to preach with unwonted earnestness and unction. They emphasized the doctrines of repentance for sins, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, regeneration, the witness of the Spirit, and a life of holiness and self-denial.

These doctrines, though plainly taught in the Sacred

Scriptures, had received very little attention from the clergymen of that day. The result was that, to many persons, the three evangelists seemed to be preachers of a new Gospel. A few of the clergymen welcomed them as messengers of God; but the greater number gave them no encouragement, while not a few bitterly opposed them. Crowds, however, assembled to hear them, and the people made their preaching the subject of common conversation in their families and at their places of business.

In 1739 Whitefield went to Bristol, his native place, to preach. At first he was received into the pulpits of the city very cordially. But his zeal, while it attracted large congregations of people to the services conducted by him, found no sympathetic response in the hearts of his fellow-clergymen; and in a very short time he found the doors of the churches closed against him.

What should he do? Clergymen in those days seldom preached elsewhere than in churches. The churches were no longer open to him. And yet a dispensation of the Gospel had been committed to him, and he must preach somewhere. Near Bristol were the Kingswood coal-mines. The colliers were a depraved and neglected class of men, having very little regard for morality or religion, some of them, probably, scarcely knowing that they had souls to be saved. He went thither, and preached to them under the open heavens. It seemed to them a strange thing that a graduate of Oxford and a man of eloquence should

come to them with a message of salvation. But he secured their attention and their good-will. His first sermon to them was preached on the seventeenth day of February, 1739. This was the beginning of out-door preaching. The audiences increased in size daily. Before the meetings were brought to a close the numbers in attendance reached as high as fifteen or twenty thousand.

The people of Bristol now invited him to return to them, and preach to them in the open air. He did so. The crowds which came together there were equal in size to those that had listened to him at the coal-mines, and many souls were converted. He needed help, and wrote to Mr. John Wesley to come to his assistance. Mr. Wesley reached Bristol on the last day of April, and on the second day of May took charge of the meetings. So great were the results that on the twelfth day of May he laid the corner-stone for a chapel in which he and such as sympathized with him in his views could worship God without regard to the wishes of their enemies. It is noticeable as a most important fact in Methodist history, therefore, that the corner-stone of the first Methodist chapel in the world was laid in Bristol, England, on the twelfth day of May, 1739. It was a beginning whose end no man can tell.

Shortly after the arrival of John Wesley at Bristol, Whitefield turned the work there over to him, and went to Wales, to preach the Gospel there. He returned to London in time to be of service to Charles Wesley. The latter, following the example of

Whitefield and his brother John, had also begun to preach in the open air. His doing so was an offense to the archbishop, who threatened to excommunicate him if he continued it. Whitefield urged him not to desist, but to follow the indications of Providence ; and, accordingly, the next day he preached in Moorfields—a common on the outskirts of London, to an audience, it is said, of ten thousand persons.

The great revival was now fully begun. The men who had it in hand had found their work. They preached wherever they found audiences, and the effect of their preaching at different places was wonderful. They expected immediate results, and were not disappointed in seeing them. So rapid and earnest were their movements that it was but a short time after their first remarkable work at Bristol before their names were known in almost all parts of England as the great revivalists of the day.

As the work went forward, the particular part that each of the three great workmen was to perform began to appear. The individuality of each was marked, and each began to fall naturally and easily into his proper place. Whitefield, full of fire and zeal, was ever on the wing. In August he sailed for America, where he preached with wonderful effect in its prominent cities and towns, stirring the hearts of thousands, but doing nothing in the way of gathering and preserving the fruits of his labors. The Wesleys were differently constituted. They remained in England, laboring in a more regular and methodical way, and organizing

societies in different parts of the country, John leading in all the work, and Charles seconding and assisting him in his movements.

From the first, the brothers had the countenance, and to some extent the aid, of a very small number of regularly ordained clergymen of the Church of England. But the rapid increase of the societies very soon made it necessary for them to look to others than their fellow-clergymen for help. The different societies were divided into classes, and chosen men appointed over them with the title of class-leaders. These leaders, though not preachers, exercised a kind of spiritual oversight over the members of their classes, visiting them when sick, and advising them in spiritual matters.

Very frequently, in the absence of the preacher, a class-leader would take charge of the prayer-meetings, and sometimes would utter a few words of exhortation to the people. Nothing beyond this was thought of. But soon one of the leaders, Thomas Maxfield, took a text and expounded it to the people. Mr. Wesley was absent at the time. On hearing of what had been done, he was displeased, and returned, ready to condemn the leader for this assumption of ministerial authority. At that time Mr. Wesley was a High-churchman, and regarded it as a great offense for any person not regularly ordained to declare the word of life to the people. His mother, who was a remarkably wise woman, met him, and advised him to listen to Maxfield himself before deciding to condemn him.

He did so, and became satisfied that the young class-leader had been called of God to preach the Gospel, and he gave him license to continue to exercise his gifts in that way whenever there should seem to be a demand for his services.

This was the beginning of lay preaching. Mr. Wesley looked upon it as an indication of Providence to him; and very soon, as the necessities of the work required it, he authorized other laymen, whose piety and abilities justified him in selecting them, to take their places in the pulpits of the chapels.

At first, and for a long time, none of these men were ordained; and they did not administer the sacraments. All that they did was to preach the Gospel. Without them, however, Mr. Wesley would never have been able to carry forward the work which God had committed to his leadership.

Mr. Whitefield, after spending a short time in America, returned to England. While in America he had mingled more with Calvinistic ministers than with those of his own Church, and had become affected with their views. The Calvinism that was preached in that day was very much stronger than that which is preached in this, and perfect accord between a Calvinistic minister and one of Arminian views was almost impossible. The Wesleys were Arminians. The result was that the perfect accord which had existed between Mr. Whitefield and them was disturbed, and Calvinistic as well as Arminian societies were, from that time, organized. Whitefield himself did very

little in the way of organizing societies or of taking care of those organized under his influence. He, as has already been intimated, had very little talent or taste for any thing but preaching: and, besides, he spent a great part of his time in America. The oversight of the Calvinistic societies fell to Lady Huntingdon, a pious Calvinistic Methodist, who devoted a large fortune to efforts to promote their prosperity. These societies became most numerous and most prosperous in Wales. After the death of Lady Huntingdon, Calvinistic Methodism ceased to be aggressive. It is now almost unknown outside of Great Britain.

The Arminian, or Wesleyan, societies received less patronage from wealth, but they had a more steady and vigorous growth. It is Arminian Methodism that has extended into various parts of the world outside of Great Britain, and that has attained to the greatest numbers and influence there.

At the end of five years from the time of the commencement of out-door preaching, near Bristol, the progress made in establishing these societies had been so great that it was deemed necessary for the preachers who were co-operating with Mr. Wesley to be brought together for consultation. They were convened in the Foundry Chapel, London, on the 25th of June, 1744. This was the first Methodist conference ever held. Those who composed it were John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Henry Piers, Samuel Taylor, and John Meriton, clergymen; and Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Richards, John Bennet, and John Downes, lay

preachers, ten in all. John Wesley presided. The subjects considered were doctrines and discipline. The proceedings of the conference were intermingled with prayer. The conclusions reached by those present were, that they would continue to devote the most of the time occupied by them in preaching, to an explanation and enforcement of the doctrines of repentance, faith, justification, regeneration, and sanctification; and, secondly, that they would observe the canons of the Church—that is, the rules of the Church of England—as far as they could do so without subjecting themselves to any restraint which would hinder them in the work of preaching the Gospel to the people wherever they found them willing to hear it.

The conference adjourned with prayer; and its members went forth to a renewal of their labors, believing that the work that had thus far been accomplished had been accomplished under divine direction, and willing to put themselves in the hands of God for future guidance and usefulness.

It is much easier to read about heroes than to be heroes. Those men deserved the title. Success constantly attended their efforts; but it was success in the face of the greatest difficulties. They were constantly riding or walking, to fill their appointments. They frequently slept in the open air, and rarely enjoyed the comforts of life. They were subjected to abuse of almost every kind; were cursed, were bespattered with dirt, were pelted with rotten eggs, were stoned, were dragged before magistrates, and charged with stirring

up sedition; were commanded to desist from preaching. Mobs sometimes gathered about the houses where they were preaching or staying, and threatened to tear them down. The newspapers were full of misrepresentations of their motives and their work. Indeed, there was scarcely any indignity possible to men in their positions that they were not compelled to suffer. Some of the lay preachers were seriously injured in their persons. Others were pressed into the army; but they displayed such valor, and, at the same time, were so patient, and so observant of all the duties of soldiers, that they won the respect of their officers and of their fellow-soldiers.

The piety and the zeal of such men could not go unrewarded. Thousands of people who had not been in the habit of attending worship at the churches, became attendants upon the services at the Methodist chapels (for so the Methodist houses of worship were called, to distinguish them from the churches, or houses of worship, belonging to the Church of England); and many persons who had been in the habit of attending the churches became alienated from them, in consequence of the opposition manifested by many of the clergymen to the Methodist movement, and cast in their lot with that of the Methodists.

There was no effort made by those in authority in the Church of England to conciliate the Methodists. On the contrary, every thing that was done by them was calculated to offend and alienate the members of the Methodist societies. The consequence was that

there began, in the course of time, to arise, in the minds of many of the Methodists, thoughts of a separation from the Church. This feeling increased with the lapse of time, and with the growth of the Methodist societies and the consequent growth of a distinct Methodist sentiment.

Meanwhile the work of revival, and of forming and fostering societies went on. The responsibility of giving direction to the movement fell upon John Wesley. He presided at the conferences and appointed the preachers to their circuits. He corresponded extensively with the preachers, encouraging the timid, and correcting the errors of the inexperienced and the ignorant. He wrote and published books and tracts. He defended the movement against the attacks which were constantly made upon it in the newspapers and in pamphlets. He was never idle, but labored constantly to meet the requirements of his position as leader in what was to prove to be the greatest moral and spiritual reformation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His brother Charles did not less worthily perform his part. It was from the inspiration of his genius that the Methodist societies became distinguished for the fervor, the spirituality, and the power, of their songs. He composed most of the hymns sung by them. The hymns written by him were expressive of the doctrines and ideas which were heard in the pulpits of the societies, and of the religious emotions which stirred the breasts of the members in their social meetings.

As the work extended, and the differences between the Methodist societies and the Church of England increased, the services in the Methodist chapels became more regular and systematic. The members of the societies were compelled to resort to the churches of the Church of England for the sacraments, except when Mr. Wesley, or some other clergyman who was a Methodist, was with them in the chapels, as the lay preachers appointed by Mr. Wesley, as has been stated, were not at liberty to administer the sacraments. But year by year the preachers and the people of the societies felt less and less dependent upon the Church of England for their spiritual improvement. Increased attention was paid to the solidification of the societies. Love-feasts and class-meetings and band-meetings were held statedly. Financial plans were put into operation for building chapels, for supporting the Gospel, and for aiding the poor; and the hearts of the people were united in love for one another and for the preachers under whose zealous labors they had been brought to a knowledge of Christ.

In several localities schools were established, and placed under the care of pious teachers. Everywhere the people were encouraged to read religious books. And the lay preachers, many of whom, though remarkably pure in their lives, and earnest in their efforts, had not received thorough educations, were required to pursue a course of studies, so as thereby the better to qualify themselves for the responsible duties to which they had been called.

In the course of a few years Methodist societies had been established in all parts of England, and in Wales and Ireland, and some of the lay preachers who had begun to preach with very limited qualifications for the work of the ministry, beyond an undoubted piety and an ardent zeal, had, by diligence in the prosecution of their studies, and in the work of the pulpit, become men of marked ability and influence.

On the 30th of September, 1770, Mr. Whitefield died. He had spent a very large part of his active life in America; and he breathed his last at Newburyport, Massachusetts. Whatever unpleasantness of feeling had existed, on his part, toward the Wesleys, in the first years of the differences which had sprung up between him and them in regard to doctrinal questions, had been of short duration; and, in dying, he left Mr. John Wesley a mourning ring, in token of his affection for him, with the request that he should preach his funeral sermon. Mr. Wesley complied with the request, when the news reached him in England, in a most tender and impressive manner.

Mr. Whitefield had been exceedingly popular in America, and had made a very profound impression upon the spiritual life of the Churches wherever he had preached; but, in dying, he left no fruits of his labors among the colonies, in the form of organized societies. An effort was made, shortly after his death, by Lady Huntingdon, to establish Calvinistic Methodism in Georgia, but without success. The Methodism of America was not destined to be of that type.

In 1760, just ten years previous to the death of Mr. Whitefield, some emigrants from Ireland, who had been Wesleyan Methodists in their native country, had landed in New York. Among them was a man named Philip Embury. For a time, after having landed in the new world, Mr. Embury, deprived of the Methodist associations to which he had been accustomed in the Old World, had lost his interest in religion. In 1765 he was persuaded by Barbara Heck, another Methodist emigrant from the same neighborhood in Ireland, to hold religious services in his own house. He yielded to her persuasions. Soon the congregations became too large for the place, and another room was obtained. In 1768 a church was built—the first Methodist Church in America.

About the time when Philip Embury began to hold public religious services in his own house in New York, another Methodist emigrant from Ireland, Robert Strawbridge, began to hold similar services in Frederick, Maryland.

Rejoiced to know that a door was opened for Arminian Methodism in America, Mr. Wesley, in 1769, just one year before the death of Mr. Whitefield, sent over two Methodist preachers from England, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, to take charge of the work in America. In 1771 two other preachers were sent over by him, one of whom was Francis Asbury, a young man who was destined to act almost as prominent a part in promoting the work of God in America as Mr. Wesley was acting in England.

Mr. Wesley was now advancing in life, and, meanwhile, the responsibility and care connected with the general oversight and management of the societies which had grown up on his hands, had greatly increased, and he was beginning to stand in need of special assistance in carrying forward the work which had thus far been so greatly blessed and prospered. That assistance was furnished. Men of extraordinary abilities were raised up by Providence. Two of them are worthy of special notice, the Rev. John Fletcher and the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke. Mr. Fletcher was a man of singular purity of spirit, of remarkable excellency of scholarship, and of uncommon elegance, fluency, and force as a writer. He was especially useful in defending the views of Wesleyan Methodism against the attacks of Calvinism. Dr. Coke was a man of a very devout spirit, of thorough scholarship, of comprehensive and liberal views in regard to the work of the Church, able, active, and energetic. He was especially distinguished for his missionary spirit and efforts. His services and counsels were very highly esteemed by Mr. Wesley.

When the war of the American Revolution broke out, the Methodist societies in America, having but recently begun to be established, were few in numbers and weak in influence. During the continuance of the war, it being impossible for them to look to England for help, they were thrown almost entirely upon their own resources. Nevertheless, the work of preaching the Gospel and of building up the societies already

established, and of establishing new ones, was pushed forward with great activity during those eight years of conflict; and at the close of the war it was found, notwithstanding the adverse influences under which the work had been prosecuted, that the number of Methodists in America had greatly increased.

In 1784 Mr. Wesley appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury as superintendents or bishops of the Methodist societies in America. He himself ordained Dr. Coke, who was then in England, and directed him to proceed to America and ordain Mr. Asbury. Dr. Coke, accompanied by two other ministers, whom Mr. Wesley had ordained as elders, came over, in the latter part of the same year. On the twenty-fourth day of December a conference was convened at Baltimore, Maryland. It closed its labors on the second day of January, 1785. It is generally known in the history of the Church as "the Christmas Conference." At this conference the Methodist societies in America were organized into "the Methodist Episcopal Church," and, the conference approving the appointment which Mr. Wesley had made, Mr. Asbury was ordained by Dr. Coke joint superintendent, or bishop, with himself, of the new organization.

The next year after these events Mr. Wesley, who was now quite aged, made this record in his journal: "I was now considering how strangely the grain of mustard-seed planted about fifty years ago had grown up. It spread through all Great Britain and Ireland, the Isle of Wight, and the Isle of Man; then to Amer-

ica, through the whole continent into Canada, the Leeward Islands, and Newfoundland. And the societies in all these parts walk by one rule, knowing religion is holy tempers and striving to worship God, not in form only, but likewise in spirit and in truth."

Charles Wesley, though younger than his brother John, preceded the latter to the grave. He died on the 29th of March, 1788, in the eightieth year of his age. He was the hymn-writer of Methodism. His hymns are not excelled by those of any other writer in the English language. His last poetic utterance was dictated from his dying bed :

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
Jesus, my only hope thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
O, could I catch a smile from thee,
And drop into eternity!"

In the year in which Charles Wesley died, a young man united with one of the Methodist societies, who afterwards became distinguished for his extensive learning. That young man was Adam Clarke, afterwards known as Dr. Adam Clarke, the author of the Commentary which bears his name, and which has been extensively used, not only by Methodists, but also by many other students of the Bible.

John Wesley was now far advanced in life. It has already been seen that, at a very early period in the revival movement, he had yielded somewhat of the High-church views with which he had started out in life, in calling to his assistance in the pulpit men who had not been ordained by the laying on of episcopal

hands. As the work had gone forward, and he had seen more and more of the evidences of the presence of God in connection with the use of less formal means than those for which the Church of England was distinguished, he had become less and less rigid in his ecclesiastical views. He had listened to hear the voice of God in the wants of the people, and had never failed to respond to that voice, how far soever it might lead him away from the beaten tract of past usage, being at all times far more concerned to save souls than to observe any particular form in saving them. He retained his influence over the Methodist societies to the last. He attended his last conference in Bristol, in 1790; preached his last sermon on the twenty-third day of February, 1791; wrote his last letter on the twenty-sixth day of the same month, and, what is worthy of note, wrote it to Mr. Wilberforce, approving of his efforts in Parliament to put an end to the African slave-trade; and died on the second day of March, 1791. His last words were, "The best of all is, God is with us."

At the time of his death the number of Methodists in Great Britain, France, and the West India Islands was eighty thousand, and in America fifty-eight thousand; making a total of one hundred and thirty-eight thousand.

It was predicted by some persons, and feared by others, that Methodism in England, when deprived of the wise oversight, the watchful zeal, and the personal influence of Mr. Wesley, would no longer continue to

prosper. Such predictions and fears have proved groundless. God was in the work, and it has gone forward. Arminian Methodism in England, as represented by the Wesleyan Methodist Church and some minor branches, has grown immensely since the death of the great revivalist. It is also quite strong in Ireland.

Methodism in Great Britain is non-episcopal in its form. The conferences of the different bodies of Methodists there elect their own presiding officers, and the appointments of the preachers are made according to a plan somewhat different from that which prevails in the United States. But the spirit, ideas, purposes, and aims of Arminian Methodists, wherever found, are the same.

Methodism in the United States is, as has already been stated, except to a very small extent, episcopal in its form. The episcopacy of Methodism, however, is not diocesan, as is that of the Protestant Episcopal Church, but general. A bishop who presides over a conference, and superintends the making of the appointments of the preachers in one part of the work one year, may preside over another conference and superintend the making of the appointments of the preachers in another part of the work the next year. The bishops agree among themselves in regard to what particular part of the work each of them shall have charge of at any particular time. They meet for this purpose every six months.

Dr. Coke, the first bishop of American Methodism,

spent very little of his time in America. His missionary zeal led him to devote his energies mainly to the work of establishing Methodism in new places. He crossed the Atlantic Ocean eighteen times in the prosecution of this work, and at last, in making his nineteenth voyage, on his way to India to establish the Church there, died on shipboard, May the 3d, 1814. His remains were committed to the deep. Mr. Asbury, the second bishop in point of time, has, in view of the fact that he remained in this country and gave direction to the spirit of Methodism here, ever been regarded as the great apostle of Methodism in America.

The spread of Methodism in this country has been only a little less marvelous than the increase of the power and influence of the republic itself. The last of the leading denominations to obtain a foothold on American soil, it has outgrown all the rest, and is now the leading denomination, in respect to numbers and influence, in the country.

It has not attained to its present position without great labors and great sacrifices on the part of its ministers and members. The history of these labors and sacrifices must be looked for in other books.

Under the influence of irritating causes, the chief of which was that of slavery, it has been divided into several branches. These branches, while operating separately, are one in all the doctrinal ideas, and substantially one in all the methods of evangelization by which Methodism has ever been distinguished. The largest of these branches is that which bears the name

under which the Church was organized in 1784—the Methodist Episcopal Church. The next in size is the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Then there are three considerable branches of colored Episcopal Methodists, besides some smaller bodies of Methodists, episcopal and non-episcopal. The whole number of actual members of the different branches of Methodism in the United States is between three and four millions.

Methodism is now well established in many parts of the world. The whole number of actual communicants is about four million, five hundred thousand. Its schools and colleges are numerous. Its publishing-houses are immense. The circulation of its religious periodicals is unequaled by that of any other body of Christians. It has several theological schools in successful operation. And the spirit of devotion, activity, and zeal of its ministers and members has never been more manifest than it is to-day. It is truly the most wonderful revival of religion that has taken place since the days of the apostles.

Chapter XXII.

MEMBERSHIP, PROBATIONARY AND FULL.

UNION with the Methodist Episcopal Church begins, in the case of adults coming from the world, with probationary membership. The object of probationary membership is, that persons professing to have "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," may be enabled to show fruits of such desire before being received into full fellowship in the Church.

The receiving of persons on probation before admitting them into full membership in the Church did not originate with Methodists. It was the usage among the primitive Christians. The object and tendency of it was to keep the Church pure and zealous.

Probationary membership being a membership of test or trial of faith and purpose, it is the right of the probationer to withdraw from the Church at any time, without asking the consent of the Church; and it is equally the right of the Church to drop his name at any time, when, after a fair opportunity has been given him to prove his sincerity and earnestness, he shall have failed to do so. The Church never, however, drops the name of a probationer as long as he seems to be earnestly endeavoring to live a life of godliness.

While a person is on probation he is not entitled to hold any office in the Church which he would not be entitled to hold if he had not thus connected himself with the Church.

The Church does not open its doors indiscriminately to all persons who may present themselves for probationary membership. The Discipline says: "Let none be admitted on trial except they are well recommended by one you know, or until they have met twice or thrice in class."

"It is the prerogative of the preacher in charge alone to receive persons on trial." (Baker on the Discipline.) He may recognize persons whose names have been taken by another preacher or by a class-leader; but not until he does this are such persons properly on trial.

The name of every person received on trial is placed by the preacher in charge on the list of probationers in the Church record, and the Discipline requires that every such person shall be assigned to a class, which meets weekly. The leader of the class is expected to do all in his power to aid the person thus placed under his spiritual oversight to live a life of godliness; and at the end of six months he is required to report to the Leaders' and Stewards' Meeting the manner in which such person has lived. If the report be favorable, and no one know any good reason to the contrary, the person is recommended for reception into full membership, and if baptism has not been administered previously, he is baptized, and then received into full mem-

bership. If the Leaders' and Stewards' Meeting be not satisfied with the life of the person, or if the person himself, for some satisfactory reason, be not ready to be received at the end of six months, the probation may, if it seem best, be continued for a longer time; but no one can be received into full membership who has been on probation for a shorter time than six months.

The reception of a probationer into full membership is a public act. The person appears before the Church. The act of reception begins with an address to the Church, in which the exalted nature, the important duties, and the great privileges of membership are emphasized.

An address is then delivered to the candidate, after which the following questions are asked, and the corresponding answers, given:

Ques. "Do you here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise contained in the baptismal covenant; ratifying and confirming the same, and acknowledging yourself bound faithfully to observe and keep that covenant?"

Ans. "I do."

Ques. "Have you saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Ans. "I trust I have."

Ques. "Do you believe in the doctrines of Holy Scripture, as set forth in the articles of religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church?"

Ans. "I do."

Ques. "Will you cheerfully be governed by the rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church, hold sacred the ordinances of God, and endeavor, as much as in you lies, to promote the welfare of your brethren, and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom?"

Ans. "I will."

Ques. "Will you contribute of your earthly substance, according to your ability, to the support of the Gospel and the various benevolent enterprises of the Church?"

Ans. "I will."

If no reason be alleged why the candidate should not be admitted into full membership, the right hand of fellowship is then extended to him by the pastor, and he is pronounced a full member of the Church.

If baptism has not been received by the person previously to the time of his uniting with the Church on probation, he may be baptized at any time, when, in the judgment of the pastor, he shall seem to be qualified to receive the ordinance before being received into full membership. But it is not the design that baptism should be administered till the person has given satisfactory evidence of the correctness of his faith and of the sincerity of his purposes.

In regard to the reception of persons from other Churches, the Discipline says: "If a member in good standing in any other orthodox Church shall desire to unite with us, such applicant may, by giving satisfactory answers to the usual inquiries, be received at once into full fellowship." The "usual inquiries" are

such as are made in receiving a probationer into full membership.

A full member of the Church can not be dismissed from Church membership by being "dropped." If the Church should become dissatisfied with him, the only way in which it can get rid of him, if he should not see proper to ask the privilege of withdrawing, is by formal trial, either for misconduct of some kind, or for neglect of duty.

A member under complaint can not withdraw without the consent of the Church, provided the Church be willing to bring him to trial. But one against whom there is no complaint has the right to withdraw at any time.

A person withdrawing from the Church has no right to demand a certificate of withdrawal, or any kind of paper. All that is necessary is that the pastor should make an entry opposite his name corresponding to the facts. "Certificates should not be given to those who withdraw from our Church, and do not intend to unite with any other evangelical Church." (Baker on the Discipline, Chap. IV, Sec. i, 10.)

"A preacher may give a note of recommendation to any member who wishes to unite with any other evangelical denomination." (Discipline, ¶ 179, § 5.) But when this is done it is not done as a matter of "obligation," but, "as a matter of courtesy." (Baker on the Discipline, Chap. IV, Sec. i, 3.)

The only person to whom a preacher is bound to give a certificate of membership is one, against whom

there are no charges, "who removes to another circuit or station." The authorized form of such a certificate is in these words: "*A. B., the bearer, has been an acceptable member of the Methodist Episcopal Church,*" with a statement of the place or of the name of the Church in which the membership was held, signed by the preacher in charge. Nothing else is needed to secure to the person to whom it is given full recognition by the preacher in charge and the members of the Church to which it is presented.

It is the duty of a member to hold his membership at the point at which he enjoys his Church privileges. "When pastoral charges are contiguous, there may be a change of Church relation from the one to the other without a change of residence; but if the member removes his residence beyond the reach of his privileges, and the oversight of his pastor and leader, he must remove his membership by certificate, unless he has no access to Church privileges convenient to his new residence." (Baker on the Discipline, Chap. IV. Sec. i, 4.)

It is not contemplated that a person receiving a certificate should use it for any other purpose than that for which it is given. For a member to receive a certificate of membership, and hold it in his possession for any length of time beyond that which may be necessary, is to act in bad faith towards the Church.

Occasionally a member of the Church is compelled to be absent from the place where he holds his membership, without actually removing "to another circuit or station." In such case he ought to communicate

by letter with the Church from time to time, by way of keeping the pastor and members informed of his religious state, and also by way of aiding in the support of the Gospel and of the various benevolent enterprises of the Church. When one takes membership in the Church, he does it without any condition expressed or implied that he is to have a respite from duties and obligations at any time.

Chapter XXIII.

HOW LONG AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES?

MANY persons, after having made a fair start in the Christian life, turn back to the world. This results, in most cases, from a want of sufficient previous consideration of the difficulties which lie in the way, and a consequent want of purpose and preparation to meet them.

It is of the greatest importance for every person beginning the Christian life to do so with a full and clear understanding that it does not promise those pursuing it exemption from sickness, pains, losses, alarms, and the various other vexations and annoyances to which those who are not pursuing it are subject; that it does not prevent them from having enemies; that it does not hide from them the faults of other persons; that it does not prevent them from sometimes imagining faults where none, in fact, exist; that it does not, in a word, promise to make their pathways smooth and easy before them, nor to dissipate the clouds which may at times gather about their heads.

The religious life, if properly lived, gives peace and comfort in the midst of these things; enables those who are enduring them to go forward cheerfully in spite of them; sustains their courage and stimulates

their zeal in the pursuit of all that is right and true; but it does not take them through this world by any shorter or less difficult way than that in which others are led.

It is necessary for you, dear friend, who have just begun this life, to have a correct understanding on this subject. Do not allow yourself to imagine that, because you have begun to confess Christ before the world, you are not to have any more trouble, anxiety, or care; for, if you do, you will be sure to be disappointed, and will be led to think, when these things come upon you, that your lot is unreasonably hard, and will be tempted to turn away from God.

Life is a succession of surprises. You need not expect your circumstances to remain as they are at present for any great length of time. You may change your place of residence, may be thrown among strange people, possibly among the irreligious, or, what is hardly less trying to sensitive souls, among those who are coldly religious. Possibly prosperity may smile upon you, and you may be tempted to take undue pleasure in luxurious living; or, on the other hand, adversity may frown upon you, and you may be tempted to cultivate a dissatisfied and envious spirit. You may possibly, at times, sit under the ministrations of preachers who do not know you, or else who know you only as one among many, and who, consequently, are not able to sympathize with you in your struggles of faith. Some of those persons who are now starting out with you in the religious life may

turn back. Some of those who stand high in the confidence and esteem of the Church and of the world may, in an evil hour, yield to temptation, and bring disgrace upon themselves and the Church. Contentions may arise between members of the Church. Many things may go wrong. A hundred things may occur which may be calculated to discourage you. Look all these possibilities in the face, now, in the very beginning of your Christian life, so that you may not be unduly astonished when any of them shall chance to turn to realities. While thinking of the good that lies before you, think also of the evil which lies along the way in which it is necessary for you to go in order to the attainment of that good; and then ask yourself the question, whether, in taking these first steps, you have taken them with any mental reservation or not. Ask yourself whether there is any secret thought in your mind or any lurking feeling in your heart of loving and serving God while all things go well with you, and of ceasing to love and serve him if a change shall take place for the worse; any disposition to rest content with the pleasures of religion so long as those of the world seem difficult to be obtained, and of turning to those of the world whenever they shall seem to be easily within your reach. Ask yourself the question whether you have chosen God to be your portion for a given time only, during residence in a certain place only, during the continuance of certain circumstances only, while under the pastoral oversight of a certain minister only, while enjoying the associations of

certain persons only, or for life, wherever you may reside, whatever may be your circumstances, whoever may be your pastor, and whoever may be your associates.

If you find doubts springing up in your mind, endeavor to have them removed at once. You can not know, beforehand, in what frame of mind you will be at any given time in the future, and, therefore, whether at such time you will certainly resist temptation, and prove true to the purposes which you now form, and to the vows which you now make, or will yield to temptation, and prove untrue to these purposes and vows. But this you can do: you can now, with all the facts and possibilities before you, resolutely make up your mind that, the Lord being your helper, you will try to love and serve him at all times, under all circumstances, at home and abroad, in the midst of the godly and in the midst of the ungodly, in prosperity or adversity, encouraged or opposed. Make no terms with your doubts or your fears. Break all bridges down behind you, and have no thought of surrender, defeat, or retreat. Without a settled purpose of this kind, you are in danger of yielding to temptation at any time.

Chapter XXIV.

YOUR AIM—HOW HIGH.

ALL Christians are not equal in their experiences and attainments. Some are spoken of in the Scriptures as perfect, and are thus contrasted with others, who, consequently, are imperfect. Christ said, "The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master." (Luke vi, 40.) And Paul says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect." (1 Cor. ii, 6.)

The perfect Christian is one who loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength; who is not actuated by selfish and worldly motives and aims, but by a sincere and earnest desire to do God's will; who is in hearty sympathy with all the revealed plans and purposes of God; and who makes it his highest pleasure to promote the glory of God among men, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

It is God's will that all should be perfect. Paul, speaking the mind of the Spirit, says, "And this also we wish, even your perfection." (2 Cor. xiii, 9.) Also, "Be perfect." (2 Cor. xiii, 11.) Also, after having said that God had given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to the Church, he

says that this was done "for the perfecting of the saints." (Eph. iv, 12.) And again, that the preaching of the Gospel is in order "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. i, 28.) And then we are exhorted in these words: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." (Heb. vi, 1.)

The experience of Christian perfection is to be attained in the same way in which that of regeneration is attained; that is, by a discovery, in the first place, of personal need, and then by yielding one's self, with entire submission and faith, to God, in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, while, at the same time, a conscience is kept void of offense toward God and toward man. The same Spirit that has enabled one to cry, "Abba, Father!" will perfect the love of God in him, and enable him to exemplify the Christian virtues and graces more perfectly in his life.

The perfection of the Christian life is not a perfection in which the person who has attained it is raised above the liability of falling into errors of judgment. The Holy Ghost does not impart fullness of knowledge to any one, nor does it endow him with new faculties of mind. It purifies his affections, warms his heart with love, and affords him peace and joy in believing, but leaves him, so far as his understanding is concerned, just where it found him. As a little child, full of love for its parents, and full of a spirit of devotion to their interests, may often err in judgment, so may a man whose heart is filled with love to God,

and with an earnest zeal for the promotion of his honor and his glory.

Neither is the perfection of the Christian life a perfection in which the person who has attained it is raised above the possibility of falling into sin. As this possibility exists in all the lower stages of the Christian life, so it does in all the higher. But, though the possibility exists, there is no necessity that that possibility should ever become a reality. It is within the power of every Christian to resist temptation, and to stand firm in the love and obedience of God. He can do this by watchfulness and prayer. When these are constantly kept up, the adversary of souls can have no power over him. "God is faithful," says the Apostle Paul, "who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." (1 Cor. x, 13.)

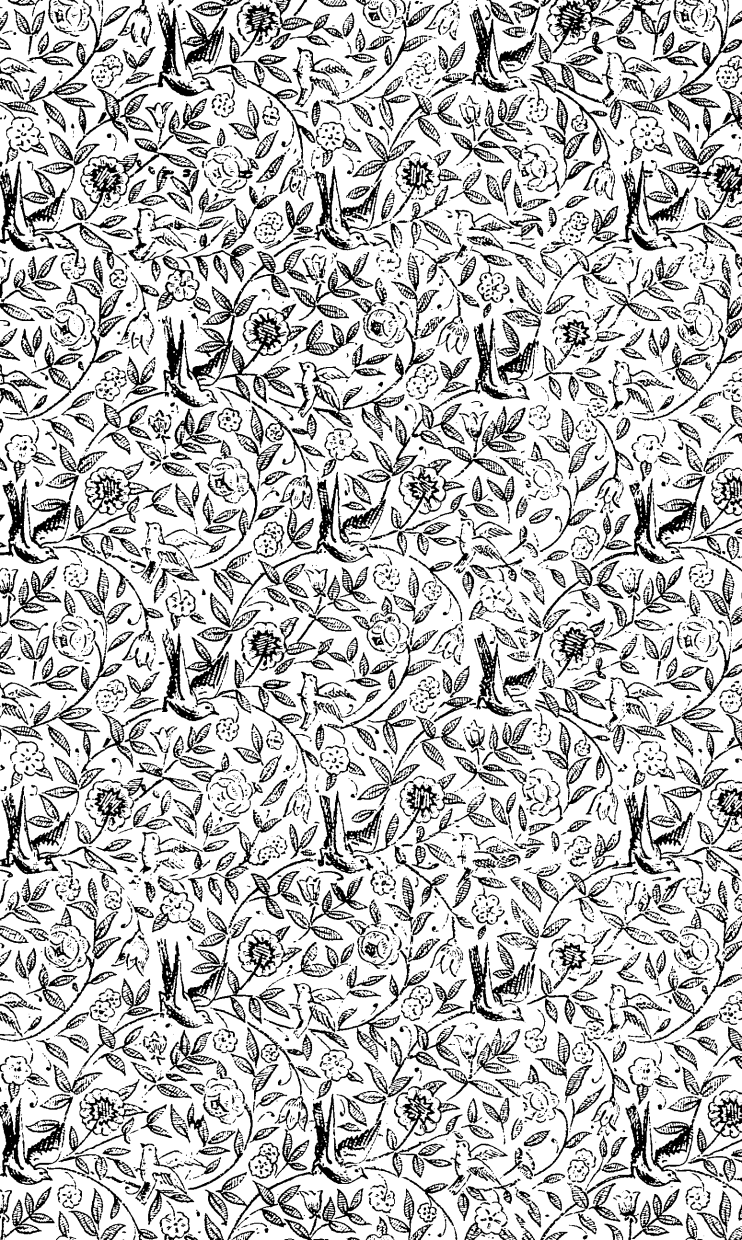
Every follower of Christ will, of necessity, be either a perfect or an imperfect Christian. Which it is better to be, there can, of course, be no question. It is assumed that you, dear friend, desire to be a perfect Christian. If so, make up your mind now to endeavor to make the most of all your opportunities. If you satisfy yourself with making no more of them than ordinary Christians do, you will almost certainly be no more than an ordinary Christian. If, on the contrary, you use them thoughtfully, thankfully, and zealously, you will certainly attain to something more than ordinary excellence in the Christian life.

But the perfection of the Christian life is peculiar in this respect, that it is a relative and not an abso-

lute perfection. The height to which one may have attained to-day may be below some other height to which it may be possible for him to attain to-morrow, and the highest height to which any human being has ever attained is far, very far, below the perfection of God. There will always be room and occasion for the cultivation of godly aspirations and aims and efforts, how far soever one may already have advanced.

You are exhorted, therefore, to be always looking ahead, and always striving to advance; to endeavor to be more like Christ, and thus the more truly and perfectly to represent the divine character, and attract men to the religion of Christ day by day.

To this end observe the admonition of the Apostle Paul: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. iv, 8.)



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